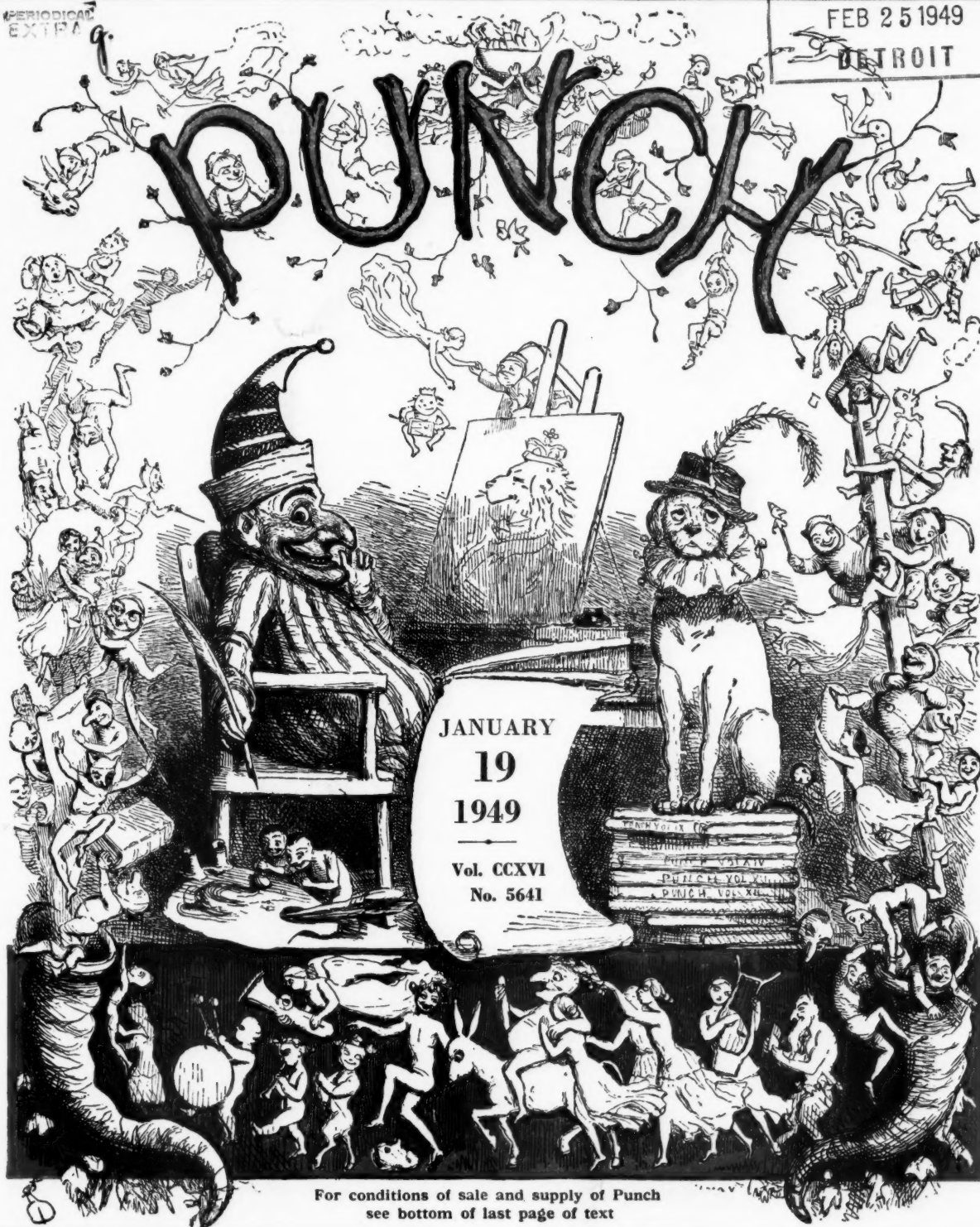


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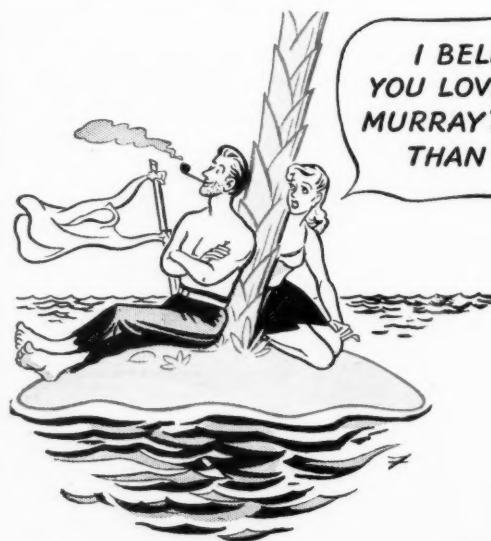
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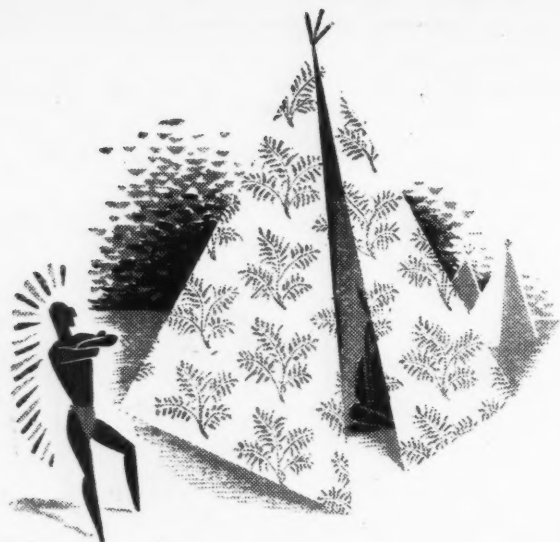


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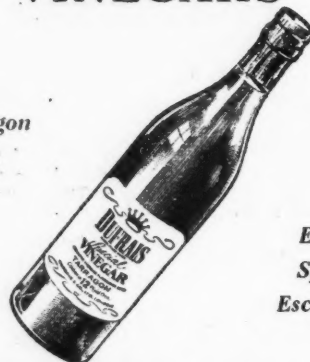


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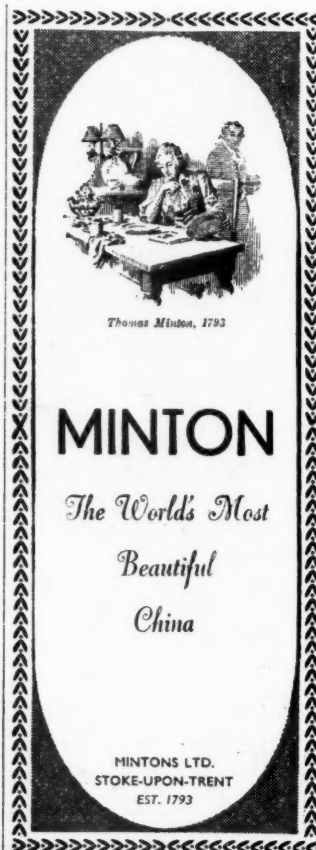
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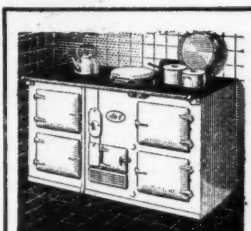
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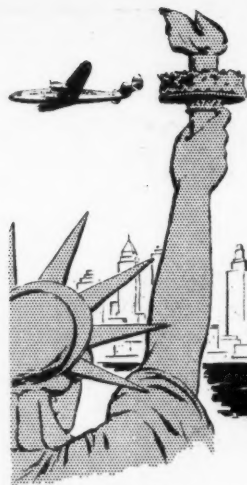
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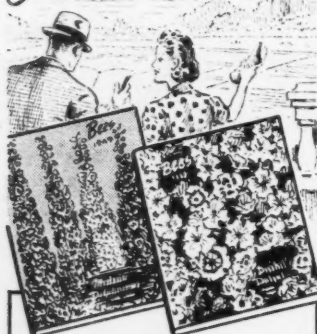
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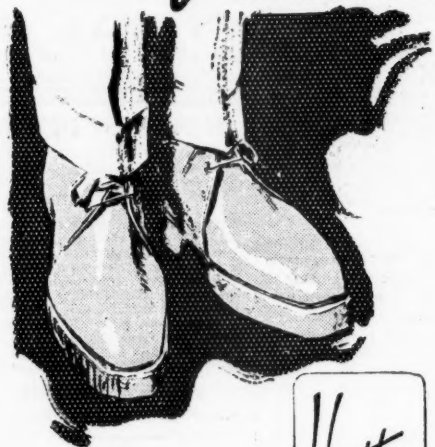
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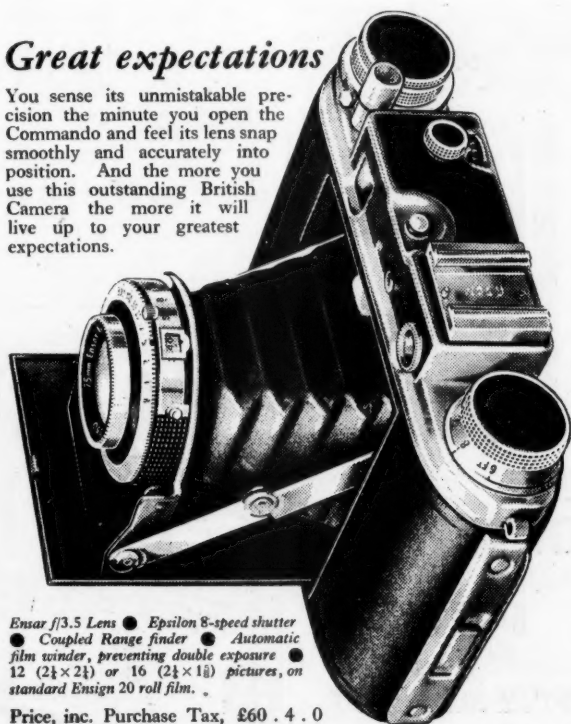
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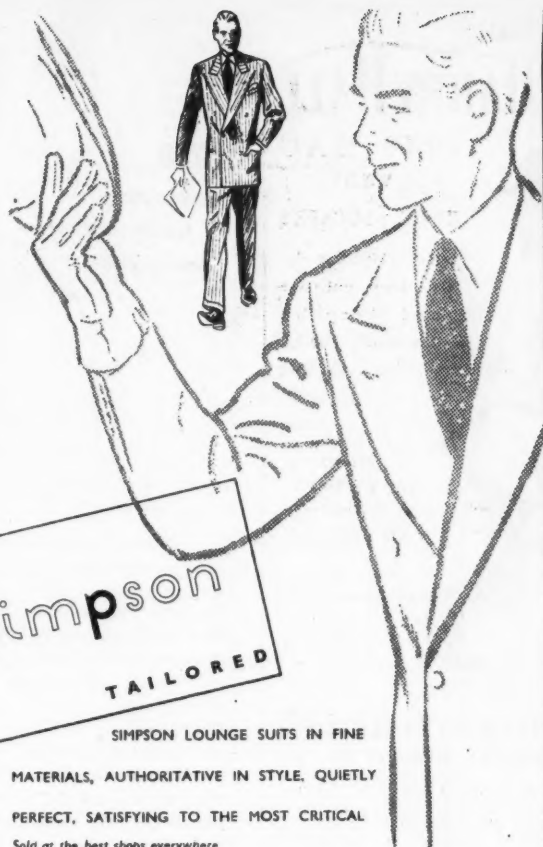


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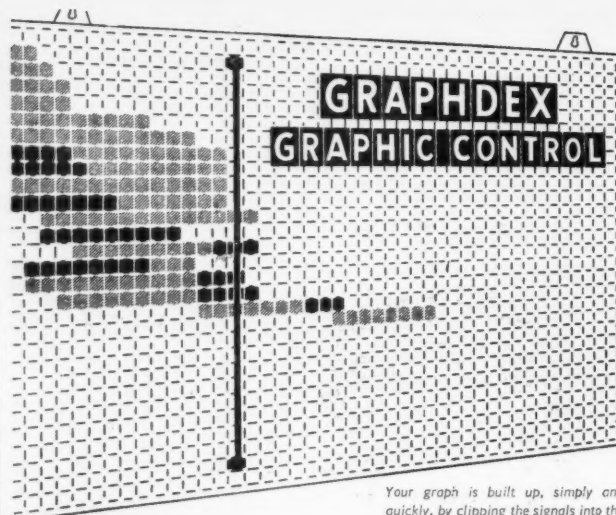
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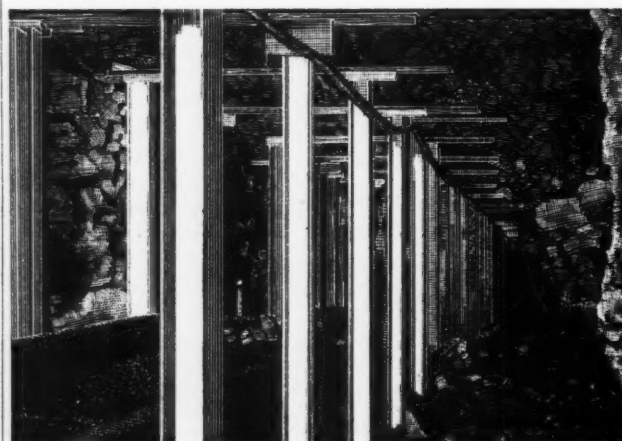
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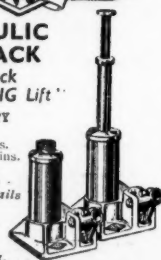
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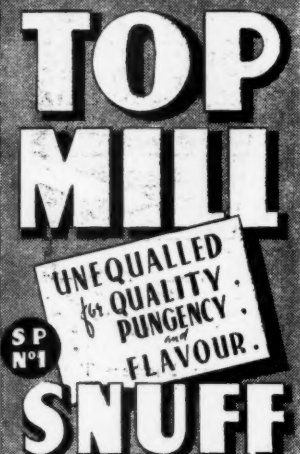
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Domestic consumers must use less electricity—*between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m.—up to noon when the weather is very cold . . .*

between 4 p.m. and 5.30-6 p.m.—and whenever you hear a B.B.C. warning.

These times apply 5 days a week, Monday to Friday.

Despite all handicaps, British Electricity are supplying 10% more electricity than last year and 80% more than before the war.

BRITISH ELECTRICITY

January, 1949



John Mayow

Air is necessary both to keep a fire alight and to maintain life. Though this important fact has been known for thousands of years, it was an English chemist and physician, John Mayow, who first proved by practical experiments that only a part of

air supports life and that there is a great similarity between breathing and burning. This part of the air, which we now know to be oxygen, Mayow called the "nitro-aerial spirit". He kept a mouse in a jar of air closed by a bladder and observed that the bladder bulged inwards probably with the contraction of the air inside as the mouse used up the oxygen. He also observed that a mouse alone in a closed jar lived twice as long as a mouse kept in a jar together with a burning lamp, showing that both mouse and lamp were using up the same part of the air.

Though Mayow produced some remarkably shrewd theories on chemical affinity and was one of the first chemists to explain how nitric acid is produced by the action of sulphuric acid on nitre, his reputation rests on his work as a practical experimenter. He was born in Cornwall in 1641 and entered Wadham College, Oxford, in 1658. He died at Bath at the early age of thirty-five, a few months after his election to the Fellowship of the Royal Society. John Mayow, English physician, was one of several chemists who helped to solve the riddle of combustion—one of the most fundamental reactions in chemistry.

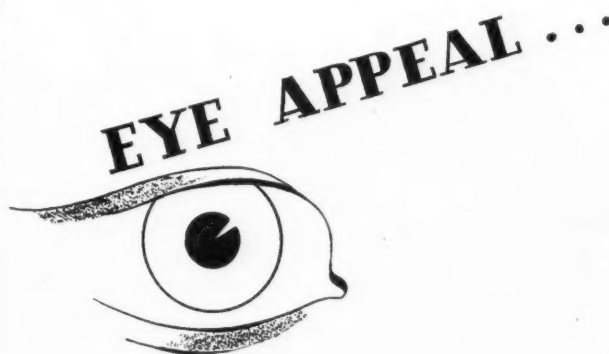


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that would
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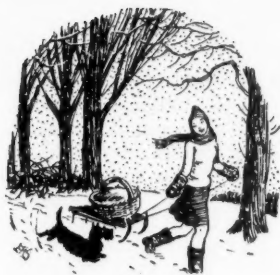
No one can do his work efficiently without good sight — so treat your eyes with respect. Try to help them whenever possible—for instance, by wearing glasses if necessary, and by generally following professional advice to the letter. Proper care and rest are essential of course. And when you have any minor eye troubles, remember that Optrex is the perfect servant of the eyes, and it will help to keep them in perfect health. Keep a bottle handy. *Almost every day somebody in the family will need it—for a Stye, or Conjunctivitis, or before the Party, or after an extra hard day for the eyes.*



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PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCXVI No. 5641

January 19 1949

Charivaria

THE influenza epidemic which has been raging in Italy is now reported to have reached Northern France. Queues are already forming up outside consulting-rooms in expectation of its arrival here.

Speaking on the radio, an Army sergeant-major mentioned that the first person to wish him a happy New Year on the first of January was a new recruit who had been called up on that day. We trust that he returned the compliment by saying "And the same to you, plus the extra six months."



"Syphonic Poem, Til Euel-spiegl."—Concert programme in local paper.
Strausssssss?

Recent news items tell of extensions on the Moscow Underground and the opening of new stations on the London system. Engineers at this end are beginning to listen for the sound of picks.

"If he has a fault," says a correspondent about a well-known acquaintance, "it is the unnecessary strength of his handshake." It sounds more like a vice.

"At 3 o'clock with the total at 160 a halt was called for drinks, Hutton having 77 and Washbrook 78."—"Cape Argus."
A record?

An American farmer has made a model of New York out of a huge cheese. He denies that mice helped him with the subways.

Thirteen American Air Force men spent Christmas on an ice cap. We can't imagine what they were dreaming of.

"But rum has not been able to save an ostrich. One of four, it became unwell a fortnight ago. Rum was prescribed for it twice a day. Keepers poured it down its throat. But the 6ft. tall bird has died. A post mortem examination is being held."

Evening paper.

Autopsy is the word they want.

In a recent will a man left his eldest son 9d. Heavy taxation is, of course, the reason why fathers can no longer afford to cut their heirs off with a shilling.

A correspondent says he has made an excellent tobacco pouch from an old slipper. Elementary, my dear correspondent.

An architect is of the opinion that people tend to grow like the houses they occupy. But plenty of bald men live in thatched cottages.

"Many passengers, including foreign nationals having pre-lunch aperitifs, toasted the Royal couple as the liner became suddenly bathed in glorious sunshine less than 24 hours after leaving the storm-bound coasts of homeland. The glass is rising steadily."

"Daily Telegraph."

Shipboard prices, of course.

A railway passenger says that when travelling on a local line the train stopped so long between stations that he got out and had a cup of tea at a cottage. The water in the engine wasn't boiling.



New York to Nineveh

I WISH you could all have been present at a recent convention in New York at which the wives of eighty American university presidents met together to discuss how to be a good wife for a university president. I wish I could have been there myself. I wish we could all have been there together; not to join in the debate of course—we cannot all be the wives of university presidents—but to listen, to take notes, to bring back to this country a new conception of the duties and privileges of wifehood.

What did they talk about, this great aggregation of presidential helpmeets? I don't know. The oracles are dumb. Even the six-page newspaper can spare space for only the briefest announcement of a meeting which, on the score of numbers alone, puts that of Stanley and Livingstone completely in the shade. Did they get down to business, should one suppose, with talk of syllabuses and Graduation Day and the best way to stop a president fraying his cuffs when writing on the blackboard? Or was it all just a teeny weeny bit up in the air.

"To fuse our personalities with theirs, yet preserve intact the inwardness of the real *you*, to reach out to our husbands, but to reach out not from their standpoint but from our own, is not that, ladies, the real task to which we have set our hands?"

"That's very, very true, Mrs. Ogilvie."

Nine men out of ten would have written "vurry, verrry" there, but I know my limitations. Listen, by way of compensation, to the voice of the Deep South, land of sub-tropical moonlight, where even the wives of presidents throb at times to the slow passionate rhythm of the ocarina.

"Ah sholy do endorse on behalf o' mahself an' th' president—"

No. On second thoughts, if that is the voice of the Deep South I do not want to hear it. We are making a sad hash of this attempt to cover up an excusable ignorance of the sort of remark one university president's wife might make to another. What can an Englishman know of the teeming life of a great American university? The words "campus"

and "faculty" come to mind. "Fraternity" and "sophomore" lurk uneasily on the fringes of the consciousness. But it isn't easy to do much with such limited ammunition. "The Head of the Faculty joined a fraternity of sophomores on the campus." Is that a conceivable thing to happen in a modern American university? And if it were, is it the sort of incident the wife of a president would think it worth while bringing to the notice of her seventy-nine co-equals?

We are getting nowhere. Not that I mind that, but we are getting there too fast.

Assuming that the mothers of twenty-seven Chancellors of English universities met to consider the most suitable kind of hat to wear at Matriculation ceremonies, what sort of fist would an American writer make of it? I mean if he was in my position, with nothing to guide him but a bare four lines in his 124-page newspaper?

This is a rhetorical question. I know the answer. He would make the gross blunder of supposing a chancellor to have control of the university monies, and he would end by turning out an article that would read for all the world like a description of a group of Bursars' aunts arguing about their attitude to their nephews' chests. I am not going to risk a similar misunderstanding at the expense of eighty respectable American ladies.

Still, though we may be forbidden to probe in detail the secrets of the New York convention, there is a lesson to be learned from their example. We can do the same thing over here; and we can carry the principle on, if we put our minds to it, far beyond the boundaries of the academic profession. If the wives of only fifty lighthouse-keepers, to take an example at random, met together at some mutually convenient spot, nothing but good could come of it.

"When your man gets home after a long spell at the mercy of the elements he does not want to be greeted by a cormorant in the front parlour, however well stuffed."

"Thank you, Mrs. Clutterback. I am sure there are many young wives here to-day who will profit by your useful wrinkle. I now call upon Mrs. Haybury to tell us how she solved the problem of excessive wear of the left boot on anti-clockwise spiral staircases—remembering, of course, that for right-hand spirals the boot is on the other leg. (Laughter.)"

Readers who break off at this point may leave with the impression that I advocate the formation of discussion groups among the wives of men in every trade and profession. I don't. I draw distinctions. It is one thing to be the wife of a professional acrobat, it is another to be the wife of an Assyriologist. To be a good wife for an acrobat calls for a readiness to hand short pieces of rope, reinforced skull-caps and so on to the loved one at appropriate moments, and (in advanced cases) to hold the lower part of an aluminium rod with an expression of anxious delight while he prepares to stand on his head on top of it; but I cannot agree that a girl's chances of happiness are going to be improved by any amount of discussion on topics like these. You either have the gift or you have not. A woman married to an Assyriologist faces a more complicated rôle. She can make or mar him:

"Mrs. Dumbell speaks of helping to arrange her husband's specimens. That, if I may say so, is talk fit only for the consorts of botanists. In the cataloguing of potsherds and rude clay bricks, *there*, I agree, is work suited to a woman's hand. But, surely, ladies, if the name of Tiglath-pileser means anything to us at all—"

I pause here, irrevocably, to ask whether, in fact, it does.

H. F. E.





THE WAY TO WESTMINSTER

"Coming for a walk?"



"They must have come while we were listening to Dick Barton."

Miner, Forty-Niner

FOUR years of Socialism have dealt a decidedly nasty blow, a librarian informs me, at the old masterpieces of socio-economic fiction. Disraeli's *Sybil*, or *The Two Nations* hasn't been off his shelves, it seems, since the National Insurance scheme was launched, and Dickens's *Hard Times* has only been out once and then only for an hour or so. This kind of thing is of course inevitable. Set against the supposedly planned and egalitarian society of 1949 the pre-war works of such writers as Cronin, Spring and Greenwood lose their stark realism and become faded fantasies, exerting a relatively mild pull on the book-tokens. Yet I am not convinced that these novels should be scrapped: I feel that careful revision would make them almost as good as new. The following episode is intended to inspire such revision. It proves, I hope, that the old formula *can* work even in the new set-up. Now read on.

CHAPTER XV

Mrs. Webstraw was bustling ominously. She worried her kitchen like

a puppy with a slipper, nagging at it, harrying it into submission. She opened the drawers of the varnished chest and slammed them shut again; she arranged the crockery on the open dresser with such violence that it shivered and whined; she mauled the stove, rattling its bars and stabbing at the coals as though they were vermin. Mr. Webstraw sat motionless at the table surrounded by the paraphernalia of the pools—forms, newspaper-cuttings, guides and perm. tables—and prepared for the storm.

A few more laps of the room and Mrs. Webstraw was ready, her nerves trimmed taut. Suddenly she stopped her noisy book-dusting and fixed her husband with a look of deep hostility.

"Tha mustna think, Jim Webstraw," she said, "that t'news in t'Echo has escaped me. Ah've seen it, me lad, an' it's fair turned me stummick."

"Now, Rosie, luv, dunna tha bother wi' things tha knows nowt about. Tha'lt nobbut upset thissen," said Mr. Webstraw. He turned his head away slowly and began to count the floral parallelograms on the wall-paper—an

occupation that always seemed to comfort him in moments of distress.

"Oh, so it's nowt to do wi' me, is it," said Mrs. Webstraw, "when me mon gets led up t'garden path by t'union and goes an' asks for more wages and threatens to put us all in t'workhouse. Oh, no, it's nowt to me! Raise wages, wages, wages—that's all t'union thinks on!"

"But it's natural, lass, for a mon to want more pay. Ah want to better meself, don't Ah?"

"Aye, an' ruin us into t'bargain. What dost tha think'll happen when tha gets thee fine increase in pay? Ah'll tell thee—prices'll go up by same amount an' it'll be t'women who'll have to stand t'racket."

"Tha't talkin' rubbish, woman, if prices rise tha'lt be no worse off: subsidies'll go up too."

"Subsidies! Subsidies always lags behind prices, an' well tha knows it. Higher wages, higher prices and subsidies trailin' far behind—why it's nobbut officious spiral. Tha'lt be payin' supper-tax next, an' then where'll we be?"

Mr. Webstraw refused the challenge. "Ah'll tell thee then," went on Mrs. Webstraw. "We'll be in Queer Street."

"Talk sense, Rosie. Ah'll do me duty, tha' knows that. Ah'm smokin' as hard as Ah con to give Sir Stafford t'money for t'subsidies. But Ah'll smoke harder in future. An' that's a promise."

"That's just t'trouble—theer's no more cigarettes to be had, so tha conna smoke any more."

"Happen Sir Stafford'll ease things a bit by puttin' more tax on cigarettes. Then t'shortage won't matter. Aye, Ah reckon that's what he'll do, lass. Tha'll get thee subsidies, never fear."

"If only tha'd drink a sup occasion-ally! Drinkin's easier nor smokin' an'

quicker. Tha could pay tax for all t'subsidies if tha took a pint or two regular like any ordinary mon."

Mr. Webstraw grimaced. "Ah canna abide the stuff, Rosie," he said.

"Happen sherry or cocktails'd suit thee better. Tha'st never tried 'em."

"Nay, lass. 'Tis no good, Ah canna break meself o' bein' stemious."

"Well, get on wi' thee pools then. Tha con pay a bit o' tax that way, but not much."

"Ah could double me stake—that'd pay for subsidies on tea an' sugar an'—"

"But if tha doubled stake tha'd go an' win summat an' only make things worse. It's nobbut officious spiral, Ah tell thee, nobbut officious spiral . . ."

The struggle is resumed in the next chapter with exchanges covering the dangers of full employment, the appalling burden of disincentives, the delusions of nationalization and (naturally) a new definition of democracy, but I have said enough, surely, to prove my point. With a bit of ingenuity the old arguments *can* be warped to fit the present economic *impasse* and ring astonishingly true. Authors who follow this advice should try to get their revised editions on the market as soon as possible, just in case.

And they should of course take the greatest possible care of the original versions. They may come in useful later on. Hon.

Six Pages

ON the first morning of the six-page newspapers the eight-twenty-five looked much as usual when she pulled into our station. There was no hint then of the frightful passions that were to be aroused in every compartment and, sweeping from end to end of the train, transform her into a veritable thing by the time she staggered into the capital. It is at our station that the eight twenty-five fills up.

As she left the platform everything was normal. Those who had read the front page at breakfast were reading the back page. Those who had not yet read the front page were doing so. The scene was set.

It was at approximately eight twenty-eight that a man named Wilkins, seated, it is believed, in the corner of a third-class compartment, completed his reading of both the front and back pages of his newspaper. He opened the paper wide and folded it back in order to read the inside pages, and the middle sheet fell down on to his lap and from there to the floor.

For a moment Wilkins hesitated. He had not realized, he says in his statement, that he was in possession of a six-page paper, and for a few seconds the sight of the extra sheet on the floor, since he had been ignorant of the sheet's existence till then, nonplussed him. Then he bent down to pick it up.

At exactly the same moment, it seems, another traveller, wishing to alight at a station, moved across the compartment towards the door. Treading on the third and fourth pages of Wilkins' newspaper with one foot, he tore them with the other. Wilkins was left with a four-page paper.

He was asked later, at the inquiry, why, since he had been reading a four-page paper in the train for many months, he had found it so outrageous to be called upon to do so once again on this occasion. "I can only say, my lord," he replied, "that the best way to arouse a man's most powerful possessory instincts is to take something away from him that he's only just found out he's got."

Wilkins, then, leapt to his feet with a cry. Simultaneously five other travellers in the compartment opened their newspapers and folded them back to read the inside pages. All five middle sheets of newspaper fell to the ground.

We may perhaps turn here to the words of Wilkins' statement. "It seemed," he says in an apt phrase, "to be raining middle sheets. They were all over the carriage. Some were on the floor, some on the luggage-rack. I saw a man put his head through one. It was a frightful scene."

We may, if we like, smile at the confusion of mind which occasions the statement that there were newspapers on the luggage-rack, but it is evident that this mental confusion was shared by most of the other travellers. In a moment the compartment was in an uproar. Men were on their feet, shouting. Others were on their knees, groping. Wilkins was on the luggage-rack, crying. Newspapers sailed through the air. Headlines screamed. Wild accusations were flung about. One of them, wilder than the rest, flew out into the corridor and hit a man in the neck. Streaming with blood, he rushed into another compartment to pull the communication-cord. The travellers in the compartment, alarmed

by the noise, thought they were being attacked. They threw the man back into the corridor. He rushed into another compartment. They threw him back into the corridor again. Soon everybody was throwing somebody into the corridor. When the corridor was full they threw each other back into the compartments. The train rocked from the fighting.

When she pulled into the terminus not a newspaper was left alive and the guard's hair had turned white overnight. As soon as the doors were opened, the gaping holes into which they had fitted were revealed. The passengers poured out, many being spilled in the confusion, and the platform was trampled on.

Telephone calls from stations down the line had brought reporters, as well as police, ambulances and a referee, to the scene, but the newspapers had only four pages the following day, and they couldn't find space for the incident.

Heredity

THE epitaph beneath the marble bust Of grandpapa proclaims that he was just . . .

Geneticists agree that this shows clearly

Why I am so conspicuously merely.

"Somehow tinned pears never seem to have that fresh taste, and after trying several ways and means I have at last found something really worth repeating. To a small tin of peas add half a teaspoon of mixed herds. The result is amazing."

N.Z. Woman's paper.

We can imagine.

At the Pictures

Elizabeth of Ladymead—Sealed Verdict—Third Time Lucky

A FEELING of curiosity, the daring thought that I might try to isolate the principle that makes the Wilcox-Neagle films so immensely successful, drove me to see the new

and dramatic way their beautiful ANNA was behaving, being as impressed by her repartee and her rhetorical flourishes as if they believed she had thought of them at that moment herself.

I realize gloomily that to some readers all this sounds pompous and superior; they are saying "Never mind the showing off—all we want to know is *what it's about* and *if it's good*." But the trouble is that many more words than this would be needed even to begin to explain why the Wilcox-Neagle formula does not, in my view, produce a "good" film; all I will venture to say is that those particular readers, at least, wouldn't agree with me . . . To say what it's about is easier. It is a device to enable Miss NEAGLE to take four parts, each that of the wife of a soldier returning after a war (1854, 1903, 1920, and the last one), and always in the same house. It is in Technicolor; it is lavishly "mounted," and carefully accurate in its period trappings (the Victorian episode is frankly played for laughs and is, I think, the most successful); it has good small-part players and is often pictorially interesting. I was never bored, and I know a great number of people will be delighted. Perhaps it is silly to wish to make them critical.

It might not be very difficult to use *Sealed Verdict* (Director: LEWIS ALLEN) as an example of the irresponsible way Hollywood will cheapen and "hoke up" a serious and complicated subject in order to make an immediately palatable, easily forgotten, commercially successful piece of entertainment. In a sense this is reminiscent of *A Foreign Affair*—without most of the cynical flippancy but also without most of the fun; and as an ostensibly more serious work it should perhaps be criticized in proportion more seriously. Yet as one sees the old situations developing—the theme involves the trial of Nazi war-criminals in American-occupied Germany, and the handsome young military prosecutor falls for the beautiful French witness—

it is hard to regard the story as anything but a contrived melodrama, and no doubt the producers hope it will attract plenty of cash customers on those terms. However, a note at the beginning says "Exterior scenes for this picture were photographed in Europe," as if to suggest that no expense was spared, and the disturbing implications are there (the prosecutor uneasy about convicting on insufficient evidence, the crazily revengeful witness). RAY MILLAND is the conscience-troubled lawyer, FLORENCE MARLY the French girl who distracts him, JOHN HOYT the unrepentant Nazi. It's a film less interesting as a story than in incidentals.

No room for much about *Third Time Lucky* (Director: GORDON PARRY), and in fact it isn't important; that it held my attention rather surprised me, for it's one of those little British crook dramas the ingredients of which have been used over and over again. But GLYNIS JOHNS is very good at giving an impression of naturalness and sincerity, the moments of suspense are well handled, and there is unexpected pleasure for the eye in the way many of the shots have been composed. Unimportant, but certainly better than some more expensive efforts I could mention.

R. M.



[Elizabeth of Ladymead]

THERE'S BEEN A WAR. IT DID SOMETHING TO US (1920)

Betty ANNA NEAGLE

one, *Elizabeth of Ladymead* (Director: HERBERT WILCOX). I had been neglecting these popular works because of an over-complacent feeling that I knew the near-Cavalcade formula too well; but one should occasionally take some notice, however disrespectful, of items that are sometimes solemnly advanced, in conversation and in newspaper correspondence columns, as candidates for Best Picture of the Year. I am sure that when I saw *Elizabeth of Ladymead* the audience was full of people who would be honestly sure that it is "better" than all such nasty highbrow successes as *Paiza* and *The Fallen Idol*—using the same critical criteria as Lord Northcliffe, who declared *The Man in Dress Clothes* to be "a great play" because it made him laugh and cry: comfortable people, who spent the time (when they were not telling each other what was happening or explaining the characters' motives) tut-tutting with delight over the dashing



[Sealed Verdict]

THERE'S BEEN A WAR. IT DID SOMETHING TO US (1947)

Frau Steigmann CELIA LOVSKY
Major Lawson RAY MILLAND

The Shop

SYMPSON put his head through my study window and asked for the loan of a hammer and a sharp knife.

"A fellow has just moved into the flat next to mine," he explained, "and I have promised to help him lay his linoleum."

"Why?" I asked. Sympson is normally the sort of man who gets other people to help him with his own linoleum, rather than the sort of man who rushes round laying other people's linoleum.

"There was a bit on my calendar this morning," he explained, "pointing out that we pass through this world but once and that therefore we ought to do any good that we can while we have the chance. It struck me very forcibly when I read it, so when the fellow upstairs told me that he had a touch of lumbago and that going down on his knees laying linoleum would be sheer torture, I offered my services. His name is Hasken, and he is taking over old Bunting's shop in the High Street."

He went off with the hammer and the sharp knife and I smiled cynically to myself. Sympson might deceive himself into believing that he was going to lay Hasken's linoleum because he was passing through this world but once, but the real reason was clear enough. Bunting is our local tobacconist. He always has good brands of cigarettes for his friends, but other people only get polite smiles and pseudo-Turkish. If Hasken were to be Bunting's successor it was a clever move of Sympson's to ingratiate himself by laying the man's linoleum.

Ten minutes later I happened to be in the garden shed, and I noticed a lot of lengths of the expensive sort of curtain rail with little wheels that run along it. After all, I said to myself, we pass through this world but once, and Hasken would probably be very glad of the curtain-rail and a box of the little wheels, so I took them along.

When I arrived at Hasken's flat I thought at first that he must be giving a house-warming, there seemed to be so many people about. It turned out, however, that the crowd had merely dropped in to lend him a hand in getting the place straight. Outwardly we residents of Munton-on-Sea are rather dour and reserved, but our hearts are in the right places, and sympathy with Hasken's lumbago had brought out the best in us.

Enderby was putting up some shelves in the kitchen, Bagshaw was

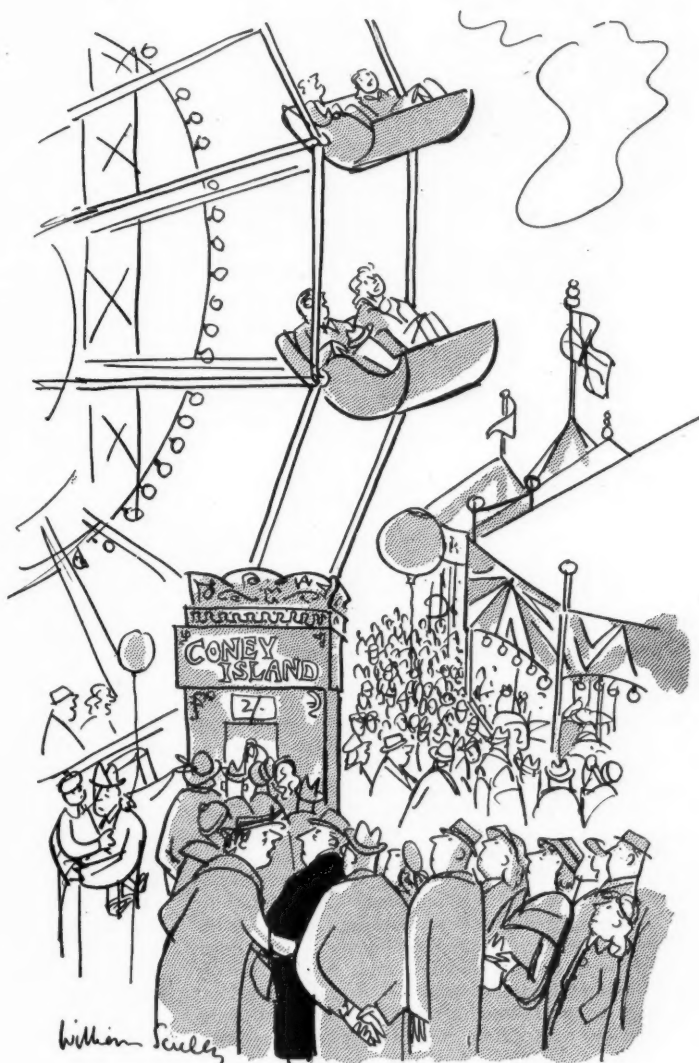
painting the bathroom cupboard, Brigadier Hogg was putting up an aerial for the radiogram, Johnson-Clitheroe was messing about with the geyser, and Sympson was doing a sort of jig-saw puzzle with odd bits of linoleum in the sitting-room.

Hasken was delighted with my curtain-rails, saying that he had just been about to pop out and buy some. I stood on a chair and started to fix them up over the window, and Hasken said that he had been quite touched by everybody's kindness.

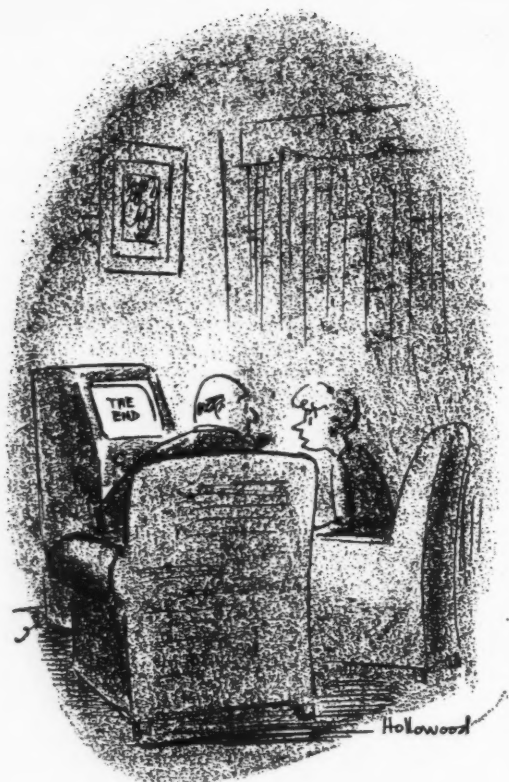
"Munton-on-Sea is certainly a warm-hearted place," he said.

"We take the attitude," I explained, "that we pass through this world but once, and that we must therefore seize the chance of doing good deeds before it is too late. By the way, when are you taking over Bunting's shop?"

"He's moving his tobacco business to his new premises across the street on Friday," Hasken explained, "and I shall open my hardware business in his old shop on Monday." D. H. B.



"It'll be nice to sit down."



"In the radio version they weren't evicted for non-payment of rent—the whole place was destroyed in the fire following an earthquake."

Slowly O'er the Lea

I HAD not been long in the village before I began to fear for the safety of the residents. When I heard a red-faced gentleman tell the butcher that his beef was a disgrace I averted my gaze, not wishing to see him pinned to the door with a ten-inch skewer; but nothing of the kind happened: the butcher merely bowed to the sawdust in his contrition.

On any fine morning in the village hawk-nosed ladies may be seen bouncing their purchases back across the iron-monger's counter and declaring that they will see something cheaper or transfer their custom to the blacksmith at Little Ooley, and instead of being assaulted with paraffin-cans they are cajoled and placated, with smiles and soft speech. It is not only the tradespeople but the artisans too who have never got the upper hand here; and though it is a refreshing change after London, I feel a sort of compassion for them in their outmoded ingenuousness—and something sterner for the red-faced gentlemen and hawk-nosed ladies who, still gliding majestically on an upper plane, lean down ever so slightly to command the village plumber, and openly address the dustmen by their surnames. I realize now that the lady from whom I bought my house was not being facetious when she wrote, concerning the village carpenter, "I have to-day summoned Shoebright to see me . . ." Here, people do summon people to see them; autocracy still holds sway; and the likelihood of being addressed as

"Mate" by anyone below the rank of major-general (ret'd.) is as remote as the Communist Menace recently billed as a lecture-subject in the parish hall.

Fortunately—for I have lost the knack these last ten years—the necessity of summoning people did not arise for me. My predecessor had issued orders on my behalf, and on the first day at the house I received a selection of deferential callers. Shoebright was the first, and could scarcely look me in the face, for he had been reminded, as he rang the bell, that he had omitted to remove the old scullery sink from the front garden. I did my best to comfort him: any time, I told him, would do for the sink; even if it stayed there for a whole week no harm would be done, and he was to suit his own convenience entirely. Such liberality embarrassed him, clearly, and he assured me that he would bring a strong assistant the following evening: the sink must and should be removed.

In an attempt to take his mind off his negligence I asked his advice about stripping the creeper which poured thickly over the house, eating away the fabric. He cheered up at once; it appeared that he knew the very man to take it down, and would bring him when he came to move the sink. He would have done it himself, but . . .

However, the gas-man, cap in hand, was waiting for an audience. Shoebright touched his brow and withdrew, backwards, I think.

The gas-man listened with concern to my story of the popping fire and explosive geyser. It was terrible, he said, terrible, and shook his head sorrowfully. Would it be a great inconvenience to me if he carried out an inspection at once? Then he could bring the necessary implements at first light to-morrow. I told him to get on with it, by all means, particularly as the water-man, with whom close liaison over the geyser might be desirable, had just arrived and was seeking a moment of my time; but as for starting work the very next day—I laughed lightly—one expected a few days' inconvenience in a new home, after all.

The pair of them divided their afternoon between the geyser and the kitchen tap, and although there was mild dissension at times between them about the respective responsibilities of the Company and the Board, their attitude towards me was verging on the reverent. Both made feudal gestures towards me on leaving, and expressed eagerness for our early reunion. The gas-man, by a lucky chance, was able to recommend a skilled and dependable gardener, a neighbour of his named Catswain, who should be instructed to wait upon me next day.

That night I fell asleep with an easy mind; everything, I told myself smugly, was laid on.

Ten days passed. The sink still stood where it did; the fire popped, the geyser still exploded, the creeper still crept. I stood at my door that morning looking for the gas-man, the water-man, the creeper-man or Shoebright, but saw nothing except the gnarled proprietor of the cattle-food shop across the street, motionless on his front step; as I watched he stirred slightly, a sure indication that someone was approaching. It proved to be Mr. Catswain, nine days late. Dismounting his bicycle from the rear he brushed past me and walked through the house to the garden. He proved to be a delightful old man when I caught up with him, full of rich lore about broccoli, grass-seed and muck. In ten minutes' sparkling disquisition he transformed the garden from a wilderness of convolvulus and hollow apple-trees into a poem of tall hedges, close green lawns and lily-ponds, with enough King Edwards at one end to keep the greengrocer from the door for ever. Such was his spell that after he had gone to fetch his fork and spade ready for an afternoon's work I paced the close green lawns for some minutes until a heavy fall over a



"Dear Sirs . . . A squiggly bit with a circle, followed by a couple of dots, a thing like a worm, then a sort of hair-pin on its side . . ."

bindweed tendril reminded me that the whole thing was a mirage.

That was two months ago. It is a mirage still. I have never seen Mr. Catswain since.

At the Christmas Eve carol service the gas-man gave me a very friendly smile as he handed the collection-bag along my pew, but I have had no other opportunity—if that could be called one—of reopening the question of my fire and geyser. One day on the bus I did get a word with the water-man, and he was kind enough to search his pockets, without success, for a washer to fit my kitchen tap; but his anxiety to know how I liked the village, and whether I thought we were in for another mild spell, left no chance for references to my water-system generally; I was about to put a pertinent question when he bobbed respectfully and got off the bus.

It was when I got back that evening that I heard loud crashing noises from my front garden. It was Shoebright, at last, smashing up my sink with the back of a light axe. He took off his cap and questioned me earnestly about my health. Still not the autocrat, still disinclined to speak directly what was in my mind, I mentioned casually that the creeper was sucking out the bricks under my bow-window. "Ah," said Shoebright, taking the hint like a man—"my friend'll be along somewhen and do un."

"Somewhen?"

"Oh, yes, somewhen," said Shoebright, reassuringly.

"I see. I—er—haven't seen the gentlemen from the gas company and the water board since the day you—er—"

"Oh, no?" he said, interested. He turned over a few bits of sink with his foot. "Sorry to have to break un up, but I can't carry un alone, and my young fellow, he couldn't get along not before February. And I knew you wanted un done right away."

"I did rather."

"That's right." He shovelled some of the porcelain fragments noisily into the dust-bin. "Me, I don't like jobs

dangling. Like to get at them right away, like." He put on his cap and moved to the pavement, seeming to cast about in his mind for a phrase. "Slow," he said at last, rubbing his jaw. "They'm slow, some of 'em, hereabouts. Have to keep after 'em, want a job done right away. If you see my meaning."

I saw his meaning, all right, and as I looked after his retreating figure I wondered. If "right away" works out at nine weeks, when, I wondered, is "somewhen"? It may take a long time to find out. In the meantime, must I develop a red face, or a hawk-nose, and begin summoning people after all?

J. B. B.

Great Pity

(The use of elephants in state processions in India is reported to be dying out.)

MINE is to-day no light and facile story. I sing the elephant, but lately shrunk From his high state of ceremonial glory Now to be classified as costly junk.

Through the long history of teeming India He has bulked large with men of loftiest rank; Akbar and Holkar, not to mention Scindia, Owed much to him for their majestic swank.

Never procession was complete without him; How calm he was, his aspect how serene; There was a castled dignity about him That shed a lustre on the bravest scene.

Painted and panoplied, superbly got up, Noble by nature and adorned by man, As for mere horses, he'd have sold the lot up, The grandest coach was but a shandrydan.

Small wonder if a creature so spectacular, One, we might say, of such colossal fig, Should make crowds bellow in their own vernacular "What *otium* is here; observe, what *dig*."

Yet in a trice the East has lost its colour. Democracy has reared its sobering head. Void of processions things grow dull and duller, The splendour of the elephant has fled.

No pomp, no painted sides and no adornment, Nothing to do but idly stand and brood, Hathi, to-day you have nor use nor orn'ment, And now they're grumbling at your cost in food. DUM-DUM.





"You throw me the money and I'll throw you a flag."

New Girl for St. Benetsdown

THE Trunk of the Hundred Coupons, containing my daughter Goove's school trousseau, has been duly conveyed to Cannon Street Station and placed, we hope with reverence but we fear with impartiality, on the pile accumulating for St. Benetsdown; the ticket—still half-fare—has been bought and for the twenty-fifth time confirmed as residing in Goove's new purse, where it, in fact, should be; lunch has been consumed, conversationally but not gastronomically constrained; and here we are approaching the platform, with the moment almost upon us.

I have been spending much effort in trying to recall my feelings when, as a small boy, I first departed to my own big school, in the hope that a full sympathy with Goove's emotions will lead me to the right encouragements

and even admonitions to suit her present need. But, beyond a notion that I felt very much as I am ridiculously feeling now, this has produced nothing except a marked abstractedness that is no doubt depressing her considerably. In any case I am uncertain whether my memories would have been helpful, because Goove's only visible preoccupation is with her long stockings and their sustaining belt, both of them novelties which our dress rehearsal has done nothing to alleviate. "They blasted well irritate," says Goove, yanking them up and down in a public manner which we tell her Miss Sankey would heavily deplore. Moreover, as we get nearer and many obvious vintage Benetsdownians are seen, the hat, which had a stylish depression of the brim, is observantly turned up to conform with theirs, and

I see before me for the first time a Goove as spherically bun-hatted as the caricature schoolgirl of the music-hall. She also says "That girl over there has had her ends frizzed," and "They all do have bags with shoulder-straps, I told you." It is obvious that my boyhood recollections would anyhow be inapplicable.

We are now on the platform in company with the special train sprouting girls at all windows and with hundreds of presumed parents engaging them with promises of cherishing dogs, repeating messages and sending parcels immediately they get home. I look in vain for the large notice-board or banner or flag which I had half expected, saying "New Girls This Way" or something to that effect. I also, in vain, look for someone in this press who is demonstrably a mistress, but give it up because I find I have no idea what I expect a mistress to look like unless she is wearing a stiff collar with her hair strained back and pince-nez; and no one seems to be turned out quite like this to-day. However, in the distance I do make out Miss Sankey and suggest that my wife should approach her; but it appears that a headmistress to a mother is much the same as a headmaster to a father, a great rejuvenator, and the proposal is basely finked.

So we stand about united in beaming artificially and trying to look as if we're in circulation, while tow-headed thin girls shout "Come in here, Squeaker," to their late-arriving friends, and dark-headed fat girls shout "Heavens! You're sitting on my hat!" to all and sundry, and the time of departure draws near and we are still excluded. Now Goove has given up yanking her belt and stockings around, and I take this as a sign (because she will surely give no other) of that sharper discomfort, which decent fathers must at all costs allay. So I pluck up my courage and accost two round-hats whose bands, like my daughter's, bear the noble colours of Horace house, and ask them what they think our course of action should be. Such thrusting would be obviously unthinkable for anybody but a father, but he is safely of no account and beyond the pale, he is a buffer, so it can be excused. Moreover, it produces results, because the two Horatians at once and warmly invite Goove into their carriage and ask her how old she is, which is the beginning of all sincere friendships and sensible conversation. So Goove blooms again and does not for a fraction of a second delay, and her parents beam but no longer artificially.

She goes in and is lost to us, but as the train draws out we get a glimpse of her, bun-hat discarded, stockings and belt apparently at rest, eating a gift apple and discussing with her fellows those vital matters which her father will no more be told. Her sun is shining, her allegiance accepted, and it's St. Benetsdown for ever!—or at least for the next five years.

"... a hundred and forty-one name tapes, and the longest name in the world," I hear her mother saying to someone we do not know; and I feel we are now, all three of us, steady and on our course.

JUSTIN.

The Game

WITHERSPOON is one of those super-active little men—never happy unless he's toying with some fresh idea. There was nothing particularly remarkable, therefore, in his asking me round one evening to try out a new game he'd invented.

"It's an instructive game, as well as being amusing," he explained, dealing round what looked like a packet of small visiting-cards to the four of us seated at the table. "Of course it wants launching in a big way. When I've tried it on you fellows I shall get into touch with Mr. Strachey. Frankly, I think he'll be surprised."

Jones, opposite me, was already looking surprised, if that was anything to go by. Smithson, on my left, had taken off his glasses and was polishing them energetically.

We picked up the cards that had been dealt us. Each one had the letter A, B or C printed on it.

"Those things I've just dealt you are 'points,'" said Witherspoon. "What you have to do, when your turn comes, is to exchange them for these other cards which I'm putting on the table—that is if they require points. The one that secures the most cards wins the game." He placed another pack on the table and turned up the first card. It read RABBIT. "You begin, Robinson," he said, looking firmly in my direction.

"Surely," I said, after a few moments' thought, "rabbits are not on points?"

"No, no, they're not," said Witherspoon.

"Then you mean I can just take the card?"

"Certainly not, my dear fellow," said Witherspoon, raising a warning hand. "You can't get a rabbit as easily as that nowadays. Has anyone

got a card in their hand with BLACK MARKET on it?"

"I have," said Jones.

"Then you take the rabbit," said Witherspoon.

"But it's not his turn," I protested.

"It's mine."

"That doesn't make any difference where the black market's concerned," said Witherspoon decidedly.

The next card to be turned up read SARDINES. Smithson fumbled with the points in his hand. "I'm afraid I haven't the slightest idea whether sardines are on points or not," he said at length.

"Ah!" said Witherspoon delightedly, "that's just what the game's for. You ought to know. They take two points."

"Wouldn't it be more helpful," I suggested, "if you put the number of points required on each card?"

"How can I, my dear fellow?" said Witherspoon. "They're always changing them."

"I think you might at least put the values on the different points we have in our hands," said Smithson.

"But how can I?" said Witherspoon again. "They're always changing them as well."

"Do you mean to tell me," said Smithson, "that they keep changing the values of the points as well as the number of points you have to give up for things?"

"Certainly," said Witherspoon.

"But how on earth does anyone ever remember?"

"Ask your wife," said Witherspoon grimly. "She has to."

"I'd no idea..." said Smithson incredulously.

Witherspoon grinned. "Few men have," he said.

Jones was fortunate in his turn, for the card exposed was MACARONI, which didn't require any points. Witherspoon helped himself expertly to CANNED SAUSAGE for a mere six. When my turn came the card once more read RABBIT.

"I suppose I can take it this time," I said, stretching out my hand.

"Certainly not, my dear fellow," said Witherspoon, whipping out a BLACK MARKET card from his hand. "The rabbit's mine."

"But surely, Witherspoon, this is hardly fair," I protested.

"The black market never is fair," he replied.

It was some minutes before Smithson could be persuaded to give up twenty-eight points in exchange for a tin of MEAT LOAF, in spite of assurances from Witherspoon that he was really very fortunate as there were few of them about now.

"If I give up all those points," complained Smithson, "I shan't have any left to get anything else with."

Witherspoon shrugged his shoulders.

In its final stages the game was fought out by Jones and Witherspoon. Each had secured six cards when Witherspoon obtained A DOZEN EGGS through the BLACK MARKET and finished things off.

"What made you think of the game?" I asked, as we began to pack up the cards.

"Well, it was like this," said Witherspoon, folding his arms and leaning on the table. "I was in the grocer's the other day with my wife when she was giving her weekly order. And there was another chap there with his wife giving her order. And after what seemed like half an hour of arguing and snipping out points he turned to me and said 'It's a game, isn't it?' That gave me the idea."

"I'm glad you fellows enjoyed it," he said, after a few moments.

A sudden silence fell on the company.

"And you think I might get into touch with Mr. Strachey?"

We said he might.

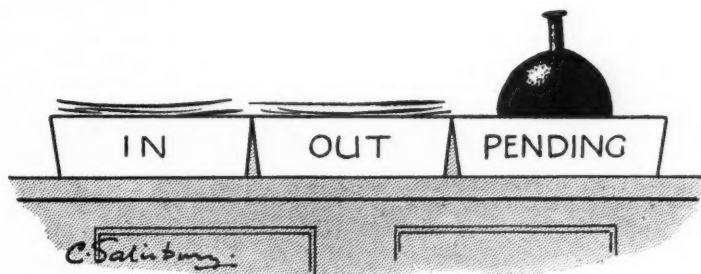
"Frankly," said Witherspoon, "I think he'll be surprised."

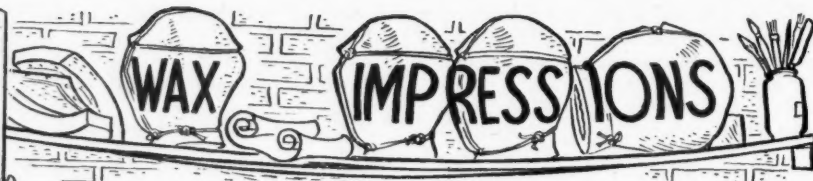
We said he would.

Well Held, Ma'am!

"With her right wrist supported by a sling, Mrs. Churchill caught the Golden Arrow at Victoria to-day."

Picture caption in evening paper.





IN 1767 a little Swiss girl named Marie Grosholtz went from Berne to Paris to live with a doctor uncle, Philippe Curtius, whose habit of modelling human bits and pieces in wax had led him to set up an exhibition of life-size figures. This *Cabinet de Cire* was such an instant success that when Marie was ten he added another under the splendid title of *La Caverne des Grands Voleurs*. Helping him to prepare it, she already showed signs of the formidable powers as artist and business-woman which were to put her on the world map as Madame Tussaud.

You'll find her at her exhibition in the Marylebone Road, beautifully modelled by herself when she was eighty-two, looking like a pocket edition of Mother Hubbard. The story of her life utterly defeats fiction. When she was eleven the French royal family took a fancy to her, and up to the age of nineteen she lived with them at Versailles, the art-mistress and friend of Madame Elizabeth, the King's sister. Just before the Revolution Uncle Philippe had a lucky hunch and brought her home, but as soon as the Reign of Terror began she was clapped into prison and forced to model famous heads brought to her dripping from the guillotine. With the perfection of melodrama at which nature sometimes excels, one of them turned out to be the head of Madame Elizabeth. Marie not only survived, however, but inherited her uncle's business, paid off its debts, married an unsatisfactory engineer called—it now seems inevitably—Tussaud, and found the courage to leave him. Then she came to London, where her seventy figures drew the highest praise. On the way to Scotland by ship half of them were smashed, yet this indomitable woman had repaired the lot in time to open eight days after landing. A tempest in the Irish Sea proved even more unkind, sinking the

entire collection and littering the Irish coast with strange relics which gave rise to a notable crop of mystic embroidery; but within three months she was doing triumphantly in Dublin. In 1835, after many years on the road in caravans, she opened at the Portman Rooms, in 1841 she handed over to her two sons, and in 1850, being ninety, prosperous, and perfectly all there, she died . . .

"Thank you," I said, and meant it, to the patient High Priest whose office Mr. Punch's Artist and I were making uninhabitable with our coarse tobacco-smoke. "What a woman! Did she become a pinnacle of society?"

"She worked too hard for that. A woman who had slapped Louis XVIII's face made her own society anyway. Would you like to see some figures being made?"

"Very much," we said. "Has any celebrity ever refused to appear?"

"Only twice in living memory. A very senior officer and a great industrialist. Both wrote charming letters to excuse such an eccentric dislike of publicity."

"Supposing you wanted one of us—"

"Just supposing," put in the H.P. quickly.

"—how would you set about it?"

"We'd have an interview, at which our Chief Artist, Mr. Bernard Tussaud, the old lady's great-great-grandson, would take measurements and study your face. Thirty or so photos are taken from different angles, and then Mr. Tussaud goes back to his studio and builds up a head in clay. From this the plaster of Paris mould is taken in which the wax head is cast. Glass eyes are inserted, and after that hair is put in, a single strand at a time."

"The sooner we go quite bald the better," murmured Mr. P.'s A.

"The body's made of plaster to exact proportions, and fixed in a characteristic attitude. As for hands, we take a mould from life when possible, but sometimes we have to use a

suitable stand-in. For instance, the Pope and Mr. Jinnah have mine."

"And clothes?"

"When we can we get a new suit from the subject's own tailor, and one of the staff wears it for a fortnight to run it in. Mr. Truman's was wanted in a hurry, and Mr. Attlee very kindly brought it by air from the Washington Conference in his personal luggage. Tito sent us a complete uniform, liberally decorated, but Hitler and Mussolini wouldn't play. I went along to see Ribbentrop, but he was a——"

"I know," I said. "Now how do you select people?"

"Well, history is easy, and incidentally very popular. There are certain automatic groups, of course, such as the Royal Family and the leaders of the current Cabinet. But as space limits us to five hundred exhibits, picking the rest isn't easy at all."

"Which living writers are here?"

"Only Shaw."

"Any living artists, musicians or scientists?"

"Not at the moment. You must remember this is broadly an exhibition for the man in the street. Sport and



"Try not to be more than four years late, dear—the FitzWilliams are coming to dinner."



films provide his favourites. Twenty years ago the big figures of the stage were included, but when the talkies came film-stars began to crowd them out. Now it begins to look as if radio will soon rival the screen."

"Which sports do you reflect most?"

"At present boxing, cricket, racing and lawn tennis, in that order, the last two bracketed. In 1948 Compton, Edrich and Yardley were three of our twenty-five new boys. Naturally, W. G. is here for keeps."

"And women?"

"They feature in most of the general sections, and of course largely in history. Henry VIII saw to that."

"Is there a case of a celebrity having to be moved in a hurry to the Chamber of Horrors?"

"Not yet. You know it was your Mr. Punch who first called it that, in the 'forties?"

"He has a great deal to answer for. How do you decide on a demotion?"

"We mingle with the crowd and note which figures go unrecognized without the catalogue. I was mingling yesterday when a lady said: 'Blimey, duck, ain't he real?"

"When you demote someone, do you notify him officially?"

"No, we just melt him down. Lord Beaverbrook has recently become Danny Kaye."

"Supposing I'd been in for years and suddenly I put on five stone and grew an orange beard," asked Mr. P.'s A. thoughtfully, "would it be up to me to let you know?"

"We'd hear about it almost as soon as you did."

Mr. P.'s A. looking unspeakably relieved at having this burden lifted from his shoulders, we moved on to the studios, which are rather like a jolly mortuary. Cheer predominates, but celebrated legs stand about in curious positions, and hands and arms hang from the rafters as hams used to in a farmhouse. In the inner room we were a little taken aback to see the disembodied head of the Duke of Wellington glaring at us from an open cupboard.

"He's in for cleaning," explained the H.P. disrespectfully, "but Lord Salisbury over there is having a new head and hands. Every four or five years it's necessary, for cleaning wears the features."

We turned to find the well-known

Conservative statesman eyeing us doubtfully from a bench on which he lay face upwards while afforestation was being patiently carried out on the western slopes of his scalp. Slightly jaded, as if after an all-night sitting on the Home Rule Bill, his last head stood beside him as a model. Near him was a hospitable tray of glass eyes, reminding us inevitably of an outsize game of solitaire.

While Mr. P.'s A. was busily plying his craft among these Guignol properties, I continued to absorb much fascinating information. It takes about four months to make a new figure, but a scoop is occasionally possible; the details of Heath were so successfully memorized in court that within twenty minutes of the notice of execution being posted at Pentonville he had taken his place in the Chamber of Horrors. Every item in the collection is cleaned each morning, by a special staff starting at 6.30. The Exhibition is open every day of the year bar Christmas Day. Except on Easter Monday, when they take it almost ritually on their way to the Zoo, Londoners form a far smaller proportion of the visitors than foreigners or holiday-makers from the provinces. (To these, as I knew already, it ranks equal top of London's attractions, with the Tower.) Average time for going through the Exhibition is an hour and a half. Three-quarters of the visitors face up to the Chamber of Horrors, half buy a catalogue. I asked the H.P. how people behaved.

"Very much as though they were in church," he said. "Of course it wasn't so in the war, when the Americans took it all fairly lightly and a good deal of chewing-gum used to be recovered from President Roosevelt's person. Occasionally we get serious practitioners of black magic, who find the figures very handy as pin-cushions. Taking the pins out of Hitler became part of our routine at one time."

"I suppose the politicians come in for their share?"

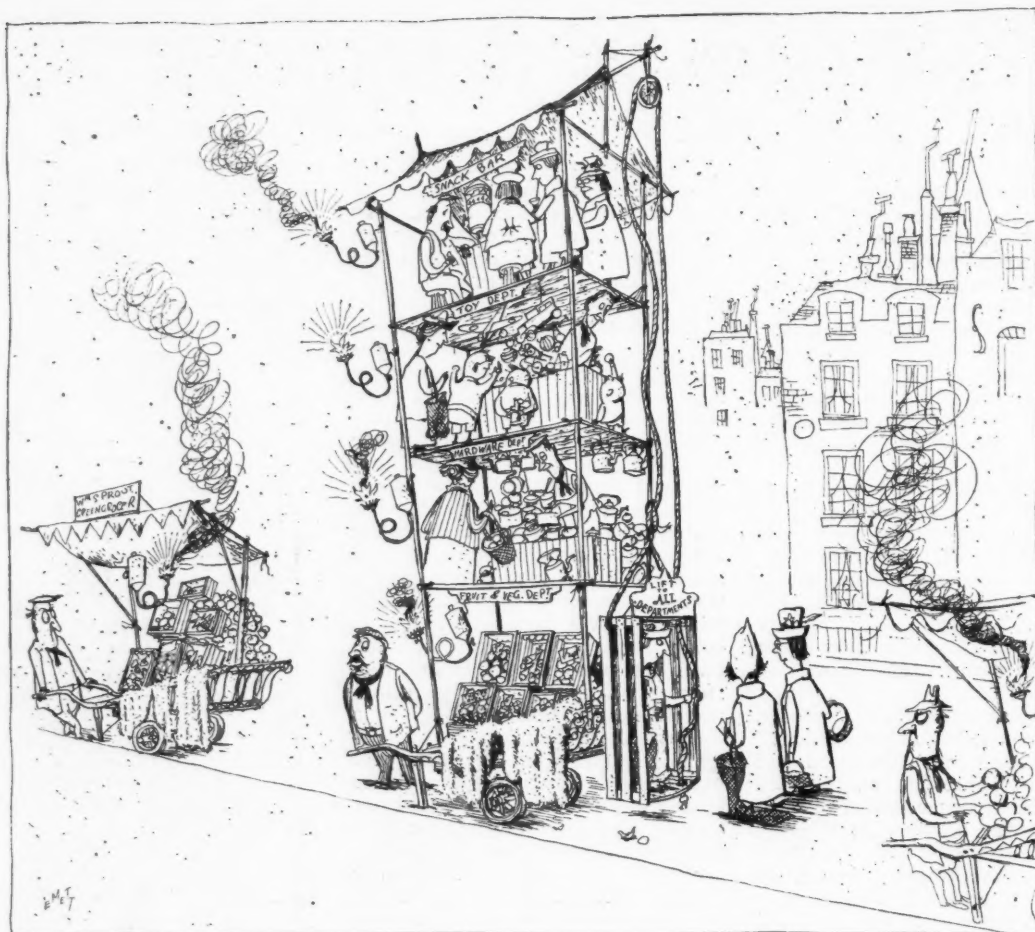
"The last to attract pins in a big way was John Bright."

"You do surprise me," I said.

Shaking our kind friend gratefully by Mr. Jinnah's hand we slipped away, to brood over this remarkable memorial to the fortitude of little Marie Grosholtz.

ERIC.





The Ancient Crow

I WANDERED over the winter hills in the wilful winter gale,
And there I found the old blind crow that sat on a broken rail,
He was reading a book by the icy brook, and the book was writ in Braille.

I said to him, Sir Crow, I said, why do you read so late?
Yonder the tree and yonder the nest, and yonder your aged mate,
The sharp winds blow and I smell the snow, and the sky is like a slate.

His claw moved over the dotted page, and steadily he read on,
Though the wind blew chill round the barren hill and the light was nearly gone;
And I saw, poor crow, that he did not know that the light was nearly gone.

I said to him, Sir Crow, I said, is it not time to rest?
There is comfort in a noble book, and comfort in a nest,
It is good to read but better to feed, and to go to sleep is best.

But still his claw moved to and fro across the dotted page,
And I said, Sir Crow, I would have you know I am only half your age,
And you, I find, are extremely blind, and inordinately sage,

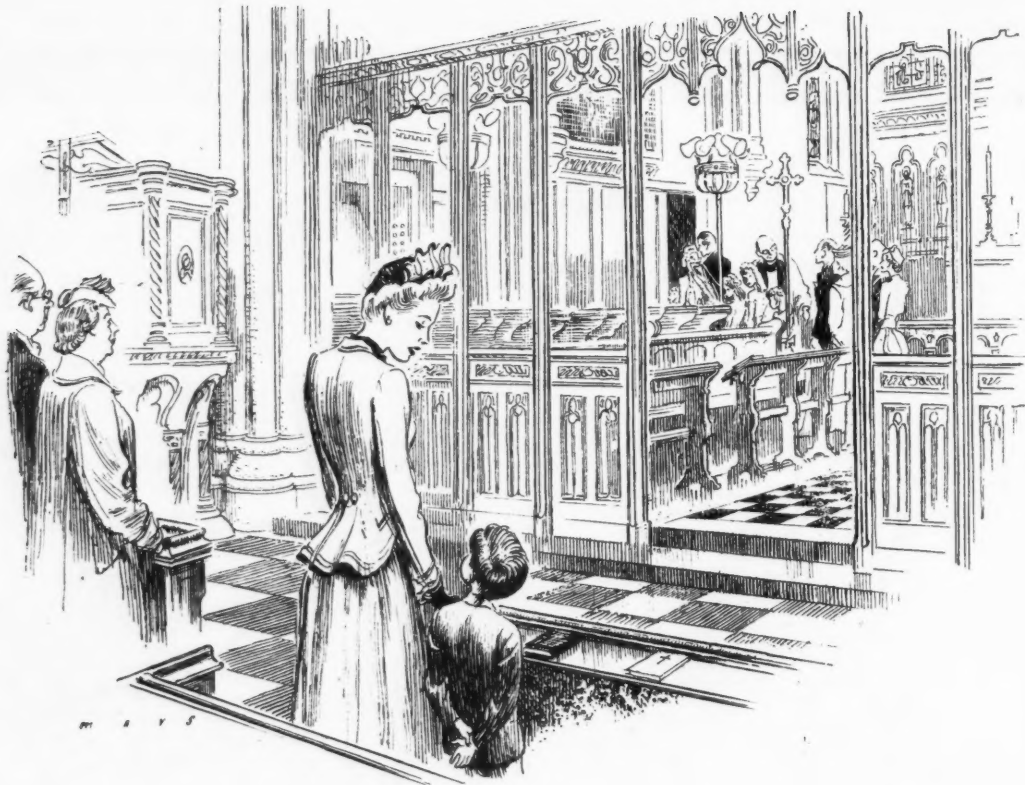
Yet I tell you still that the winter hill is not for an aged crow;
You are very old, and the night is cold; will you not kindly go?
But the ancient bird still spoke no word; and there came the whirling snow.

The ancient crow made no reply, and the night grew dark and dense;
I left him there in the flaky air, as he sat upon his fence.
So old and wise, he had lost his eyes, he had likewise lost his sense.



THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL

"I thought we'd seen the last of them!"



"Mummy, where are they going now?"
 "Hush, dear, they're going to sign the register."
 "What are they registering for?"

The London Group

ONE is more ready to nod sympathetically to someone who remarks with a deprecatory smile that "he knows what he likes" in contemporary painting if he adds something to the effect that he hopes in time to increase his likes. For to acquire a taste for a patently sincere—if difficult—painter or style of painting is an experience hardly less valuable than the mastery of a foreign language. Happily there exist Easy Introductions to this and that language; and that is exactly what is provided in an exhibition of the London Group, and a mixed show of contemporary painting in an adjoining room, which remain on view at the Leicester Galleries until January 27th.

The London Group (formed in 1914 by the merging of the Camden Town Group led by Sickert and Gilman, and the Vorticists, inspired by Wyndham Lewis) is nowadays a progressive

society which countenances a variety of modes of expression between the extremes of John's portraiture and Tunnard's imaginative abstract painting. In the present exhibition, to which each of the members has contributed a single work, there is nothing deliberately provocative, much that is stimulating, and everywhere evidence of aesthetic integrity—the result being a brief and fascinating guide to some contemporary tendencies.

The place of honour is occupied by Matthew Smith's "Still Life" painted with characteristic verve in brilliant primary colours, and it is intriguing to compare this exuberant work of a veteran with the wholly unemotional painting of "Cripplegate," by one of our younger artists, William Coldstream. Reticence, however, one expects of this sensitive painter of the Euston Road School, and it is more interesting to note a restrained mood

elsewhere: to contrast, for example, the subdued statements of Ruskin Spear and Lynton Lamb and the quiet intimacy of Le Bas (who derives from Vuillard) with the challenging assertions of some of their elders still under the Post-Impressionist spell.

No less than for the student of contemporary painting, the galleries are a happy hunting-ground for anyone in search of a good painting to hang above his mantelpiece. Here he will find, in the London Group's show, a finely composed recent landscape by John Nash, "The Fallen Tree," and in the New Year mixed exhibition, a beautifully observed portrait of a girl by Gwen John, an Interior by Claude Rogers—which remains distinctive for all its debt to French Impressionism—and (a surprise item) a rare painting by George Cruikshank called "Dressing for the Show." I advise an early visit to Leicester Square. N. A. D. W.

Father

MY father made me "take" boxing at my prep-school. I would discover its use, he said, in after-life, when I grew up. A man should know how to defend himself if he were ever set upon by a gang of roughs.

My father was also without any doubts as to the value and use of athletics in general and in detail. Skill in high-jumping and long-jumping, he said, might well be useful to me for getting over hedges and crossing streams. I am sure that in his mind's eye, as he said it, he had me escaping from the Boers, *Strand Magazine* style, jumping laagers and kopjes, and finally arriving with the "message" to Lord Kitchener or Roberts or whoever.

Long-distance running, he said, might also come in useful. "You never know . . ." This, in my father's case, meant that he couldn't think up a reason at the moment. The sprints, though—the 100 yards, 220 yards and hurdles—were well worth practising as a boy, as "in after-life" what a fool I'd look if I saw a "rough" steal a lady's purse and run off with it . . . and I couldn't catch him! And if the rough ran round packing-cases and bicycles and so on (my father's idea was, I think, that roughs generally took ladies' purses on railway stations) then I'd be able easily to overhaul him by jumping over these things.

Dear father! He did not seem to be troubled with doubts on the subject of what heaven would be like. If he was right, then he has been constantly "looking down" on me and anybody else he loved (or suspected of being up to something). So he should realize that I have, during the thirty years of my orphanage, never been set upon by a gang of roughs. And that if I were, my sprinting ability (if any) would be the one of my attainments which my instinct, easily overpowering my reason, would call into use. I have never seen a lady lose a purse, nor had to give chase in a railway station, hurdling over bicycles and packing-cases. Very few of father's prognostications have indeed come true for me. I suppose I've led a pretty hum-drum life.

There was almost always a utilitarian end suggested for any activity father encouraged me to take up. I learnt to play the piano because it would, he said, be a great inducement to hostesses in my after-life to ask me to accept their hospitality for the sake of the music I would play to them and their guests. He tried to get me to learn to sing for the same vague end. He taught me all the lore and law of the shooting-field so that when in

after-life I was asked to shoot the archduke's partridges I should know the etiquette and do well enough to be asked again. I believe that, to this day, if I were asked to a shoot with a pair of guns and a loader, and if I could borrow the former and hire the latter, I would be able to acquit myself strictly according to Cocker, father and the Badminton Library Book on Shooting. I have, in fact, never even possessed two guns, let alone been asked to that kind of shooting.

I know far more about the rules of riding than I do about what goes on under the bonnet of a car. But I haven't ridden for years. My father, though he omitted to leave me the fortune which would be required to allow me to shoot, hunt, go to gilt-chair musicales and be worth the while of roughs to set upon, nevertheless was a strict tutor. I had to learn to ride properly so that I would be able to hunt with credit on my own horses, if ever. Or I would be worthy to be mounted if I were asked to spend week-ends at hunting homes. And hunting itself, my father held, offered a utilitarian end apart from its passing pleasures. It gave you a "good eye for country." Here again I think father was back in the Boer War, *Strand Magazine*-illustration type of mental scenery, and his son, with topee and spy-glass, was surveying the veldt preparatory to leading a troop out of some sort of *impasse* by a brilliant assessment of hillocks, boundaries, streams and heaven-knows-what-else. Considering that father was not a soldier, he had a wonderful lot of half-baked ideas of the sorts of peril a real Kiplingesque man ought to be able to get out of with the proper parental training. Although I learnt to ride as a boy, I never hunted. And even if I had thus acquired an "eye for country" I can't think of any crisis of my "after-life" during which this eye, plus perhaps a horse, would have made anything easier for anybody.

Father used occasionally to take me to the theatre, and even this was not primarily because it was fun. I was to be able to say that I'd seen Arthur Bourchier, Ellen Terry, Martin Harvey and others. I was much keener on the early cinema in those days when father was trying to educate me to talk, in after-life, about the (dead) theatre. Father hated the idea of the cinema, never having seen one. It was two-dimensional, emotional in the worst sense, and cinemas were generally fire-traps, he understood. I wish I could remember the name of the film to

which I did finally induce father to come with me—for his first view of this new-fangled entertainment (I can still almost hear him saying "Teha!" after the word "entertainment"). It was something in the early Gish period, and had a scene showing a large number of bronzed Americans building the Pyramids. Probably a Cecil B. de Mille. We sat through it twice because father was sure he had seen one of the Ancient Egyptian slaves wearing a wrist-watch. He may have been right. Or it may have been a passing shadow in the pitiless and flickering sun. Father swore it was a wrist-watch and he never saw another film to the end of his life. And he never stopped talking about the Ancient Egyptian wrist-watch when anybody brought up the subject of the cinema.

Most of the things I did, thought, and read as a boy come back to me now as reminders of father's hopes belied. When I complained about having to do Latin Elegiacs at my prep-school (I could often scarcely understand the English verse that was set for translation), father bade me be of good heart. He, at the same prep-school, had won some kudos by publishing in the school magazine a sixty-line account of Sports Day in Latin Hexameters reminiscent (the headmaster had said) of Virgil's Sixth *Æneid*. I might do the same if I persevered. And if I got very good at Latin verse, I might figure among the *Westminster Gazette* Competition winners from time to time in "after-life." My father never went in for these himself, having decently forgotten his Latin prosody. But he chuckled with appreciation at the versions of Dames-Longworth, Kennedy, Inge, Godley and others.

Father taught me to play bridge. It was Auction in those days. He said it was a useful game to know, if not played for money, on board ship; and he made me learn it in French for that reason. I have never had to play bridge in French except with father, but the fog over my brain when playing it even now is spissated with ridiculous French terms half-remembered. It's worth about a hundred a game to my opponents.

Dear father! I fell to thinking of this and that while sitting back in an arm-chair holding a handkerchief to my nose. Ever since I "took" boxing at father's instigation as a boy at prep-school my nose has bled freely in moments of crisis, cold and complete calm. That's about the only legacy father did leave me.



"Well, SOMEONE's got to tell him the wedding's off."

Hibernian Holiday

NO one can accuse the Celt of being trammelled by red tape. All over Ireland, and particularly in the south-west, you'll find that routine and officialdom are kept in their proper place by what has been called "the inveterate supremacy of the Personal Element."

I mean, look at the railways. A bare five minutes before my train—the only one of the day for Mullareek and, indeed, for most of Kerry—was due to leave the terminus I found myself still in a long line for the booking office. Nostalgic though this might be for a visitor from queue-studded England, it looked as though I wasn't going to make it—especially as the head of the queue had for some time been a voluble lady disputing her change, largely by means of impassioned appeals to her more favoured saints.

I needn't have worried. No self-respecting Irish guard was going to

allow his train to leave until all those who intended to go by it had taken their tickets. About the advertised time of departure he turned up in the booking hall with the air of an anxious hen rounding up her chicks. Having courteously but firmly cut out the queue's dead wood, travellers by later trains, he took station by the final unit of his own particular brood, and ultimately accompanied him to the platform. Not till then did he look at his watch—in the meticulous manner of guards all the world over, as if bent on starting to the exact second—and blow his whistle. Someone—the fireman, I think—thereupon emerged leisurely from a porters' room on the platform, and climbed into the locomotive cabin. And off we went, a bare seventeen and a half minutes late.

As we plunged into the south-west the journey became increasingly the guard's party. On the approach of any

junction he made a personal tour of the train, inquiring for those who were to leave us. His attitude seemed to be that of a genial host who hoped they'd enjoyed themselves and would come again. At one point even—though it may have been a case of mental belt-slip—he came along asking for passengers to Lissmeen and Killorn after we'd just left the junction for that line. What he'd have done if he'd unearthed any I don't know: probably stopped the train and had it backed down for them. And I don't think it would have mattered. Irish time-tables are compiled with a generous factor of safety to take care of any unforeseen operations of the Personal Element.

At a lonely station called Castleway we inevitably encountered that fabulous upsetter of all organized schedules "th' Dublin express," for the invariably delayed passage of which local trains in Ireland spend a large portion

of their ruming time waiting at side platforms. After a while I asked a porter how long we'd have to wait, and received the unexpected reply: "Long enough, sorr, to get a pint of porther at Casey's opposite." It was a hot afternoon and struck me as the best and soundest information I'd ever had from a railway official in my life.

"Opposite," of course, turned out to be fifty yards down the road. I felt increasingly nervous, as I hurried along, of being stranded luggageless in Castleway for the night; and when I saw the crowd thronging Casey's I would have turned back except that hospitable hands pushed me rapidly up to the bar.

I was only halfway through my pint when with a whistle and a shriek I heard the express materialize and tear through the station. Slamming my mug down I was preparing to run when Mr. Casey said: "Ah, ye c'n take it aisy, sorr: Pat'll be over to let you know. Why, isn't half the train here?" I then realized the crowd was formed of fellow-passengers. I had noticed them descending as soon as the train stopped and had innocently assumed it was because they lived there, when it was merely that they knew to a man they could rely on "th' Doblin express."

And sure enough just as our engine gave a couple of friendly toots, not of instant departure nor even of impatience, but as much as to say, "Last orders, gentlemen, please!" the porter put his head in the door and announced leisurely: "She's getting ready now." So we strolled back, a happy unhurried crowd.

Half an hour later I was decanted at the tiny station of Mullareek. Finding no one to meet me as arranged, I asked the solitary porter for the right time. He at once vanished into the station-master's office, returning with the unexpected information that himself was after phoning up to the junction to find out. In a few moments himself emerged, setting a large watch and announcing affably that a minute ago up beyond it was four twenty-one. He then walked down the platform, looked apparently at a station clock and called out to the porter with a blend of pride and amazement: "B'god, Mike, she's right!" In almost the same breath he asked me would I be the gentleman staying at the hotel for the fishing, or the one for Sycamore House.

I said Sycamore House and I was expecting them to meet me. He explained that no doubt they weren't there yet on account of the train being ahead of her time the once, as she was only a quarter of an hour late. He then offered to find them for me, reckoning

they'd probably have stopped by at Flaherty's on account of the meat; and I found myself setting off with him into the main street of Mullareek, which seemed to be ninety per cent. small public-houses.

We soon found my hosts—after a persuasive attempt by the station-master to have a look in Muldoon's Bar, where the gentry sometimes went—and went back to the station in triumph for my suitcases. The station-master neatly compromised between returning on foot or sitting in the back with my hostess by hanging on the running-board, whence he was able to shout proud greetings to half Mullareek.

On the whole I felt it had been a journey that could only have happened in Ireland.

A. A.

Plus ça Change . . .

I FIND it frequently occurs That Janet, when she goes out shopping, Comes back with clothes that are not hers—

A trait I've found no means of stopping; And so to-day she has been sent To somewhere where she'll get her raiment

Provided by the Government With no formality of payment.

M. H.

o o

"Lice Of Chiang Kai-shek by Hsiung . . . 9.00"
List of books in Singapore paper.

We wouldn't have Chiang's job for all the D.D.T. in China.



"Loser liquidates the science mistress."



"Sorry to hear of your accident—are you all right again now?"

More Impressions

I WAS talking last time of impressions of people we meet, and this brings me to what we think about the people we have never met but hear of through our friends. The life of every friend is studded with people with whom our only link is those character-studies and episodes thrown off in the intermediaries' talk. I don't doubt that my readers could all name offhand—that is, if they sat down to it—any number of these characters, who hold a special place in our thoughts. For one thing, they are in a way believed not to exist. (This is no reflection on my readers' friends' honesty, but on humanity's limitations, which include the idea that when it stays in bed for breakfast then the people it can hear inaudibly down in the dining-room are not going through the exact details of breakfast or of conversation. A relayed witticism will stun the average breakfaster in bed.)

For another thing, these friends' friends—or relations, or even dogs or cats—rely largely on their names for their appearance; a dog called Buster (I can't quote human examples without coming up against everyone's different idea of a name's face) is, to anyone who has never seen him, probably much tougher and more on the point of bursting than he is in real life. With an offstage cat called, let us say, Harold you get an object darting from the Harold we know to the cat we can well imagine.

Going back to humans, we have besides their names those descriptions which some of our friends are better at than others, but which always subside into our original

conceptions and so do not matter. Photographs are a much more serious setback necessitating thereafter the impossible task of translating what our friends are telling us into what they mean it to mean. As for meeting someone we have heard a lot about, this can best be described as a vertical line to the left of which our original idea remains as a contrast which has lost its force. I must say a word about the relationship between these friends' friends and the friends themselves. Apparently, from what we hear, our friends are as real to other people as they are to us. This is perfectly fair, but very baffling.

ANOTHER kind of impression I mentioned last time was the theatrical impersonation. I bring it in here to steer my readers' minds gradually off friends' friends into the world of the musical tone-picture, or piece of music giving an imitation of, for example, a snowstorm or falling leaves. There can be no doubt that many musical impressions are better than many others, calling up all the right ideas in a co-operating audience, but there can be no doubt either that an awful lot of people meet the average tone-picture, that is a tone-picture new to them, stubbornly forearmed with the conviction that the facts are against its success. Leaves and snowflakes do not ping like notes when they hit the ground; life would be a crazy affair if they made any noise at all. A busy farmyard, it is true, does offer a certain scope to an orchestra, and it is easy to imagine what a bass saxophone could make of a cow's moo

if it put its heart into it. (There may easily not be such an instrument as a bass saxophone, but that is a mistake only a dance-band fan would mind making.) But even a musical impression of a farmyard would come out, frankly, like music, however whimsical. I must, however, record one or two sure-fire lines—the jungle, the East, the South Seas, and bumble-bees. Success with geographical musical impressions may be traced to a long ancestry of tunes to get the idea from, but bumble-bee music is a genuine imitation founded on the discovery that the bee is imitating the music. I must add here another extremely successful musical impression—that of an orchestra tuning up, done by an orchestra tuning up.

I think that in the same artistic vein I might put in what everyone knows about Impressionism; that it is a new development which is now an old one, that it is bloody, and that people (I mean ordinary people) who say authoritatively that they don't like Impressionists are taking a very short cut to their opinion.

THE impression made on us by other people's handwriting is well-known, if difficult to define. Handwriting ranges from three inches high to a thirty-second of an inch, and at the small end of the scale there are some nice, rather intellectual writings which can only be described as looking tremendously intentional. As for how our own handwriting looks when we aren't expecting it, this is noted for the queer fact that the first unsuspecting glimpse is so flattering. I should like also to point out the impression made on letter-readers by those new dry-ink pens, and to avoid a humorous comparison with what you get in post offices.

Finally, I want to go back to personal impressions and point out how some train of thought may suddenly remind us of someone and, without giving us any clue who that someone is, offer us a very firm impression in fine shades of liking or disliking. The person in question can always be traced if we think hard enough, and the interesting thing is that the impression is always found to be absolutely right, if sometimes momentarily surprising. ANDE.

Sonnet of an Old Moron

IF I could but preserve a younger face
Than this, where every year is underlined,
I would not think it such a deep disgrace
That I am so much older than my mind;

But like some gangling infant at the stage
Where neither attributes nor garments fit,
I am much younger than my seeming age
And much, much older than my seeming wit.

How, ask my friends and my relations (they
Who can't escape, or steadfastly endure)—
How can it happen that a head so grey
Conceals a mind so wholly immature?

And, knowing no reply, I hold my tongue,
Who look so elderly, yet feel so young.

"Tientsin is still under siege. Gen. Chen Chang-chih, the garrison commander, disclosed yesterday that he had laid a belt of 40,000 mules round the city."—*Daily paper*.

Must have taken him nearly all the afternoon.



ONE of the most prolific of Victorian dramatists—he lived and worked long enough to be an Edwardian as well—

SIDNEY GRUNDY was a great man for adapting from the French. His happiest transmutation, *A Pair of Spectacles*, sprang from *Les Petits Oiseaux* of Laliche and Delacour, and with Sir John Hare in the almost non-stop part of *Mr. Benjamin Goldfinch* it was one of the events of London's 1890. It is still a delicious little comedy, to which time seems only to have brought the extra flavour of the period-joke. Its dialogue is much too amusing to go stale, and its situations, though fantastic, all follow naturally on one very simple, very fertile, idea. Once we have accepted the fact that the dangerously soft-hearted *Mr. Goldfinch* becomes a monster of mercenary horror the moment his brother *Gregory's* black spectacles are on his nose, the rest follows as easily as trucks behind a locomotive. The magic of the spectacles is no harder to swallow than the metamorphosis of *Mr. Bultitude*, provided the right nose is underneath them; Sir John Hare's was evidently right, and so decidedly is that of *Mr. DENYS BLAKELOCK*, whose performance in *Mr. ALEC CLUNES'* hilarious production at the Arts is of a kind to pile up adjectives of praise. A sturdy figure when he chooses, *Mr. BLAKELOCK* has a wonderful way of assuming a ripe old-maidishness, with or without the sting of a wasp, and the fruit, one would guess, of much patient observation in Common Rooms and Closets. He gave us a fine exhibition of this specialized equipment in *Dandy Dick* last year, and here he carries out Grundy's designs to the letter, adding a delicate touch of burlesque which joins him confidentially with the audience in acknowledging the Victorians as an odd lot. A play that revels in asides easily absorbs this treatment.

After smashing his own spectacles and borrowing those of his brother, the rich skinflint from Sheffield, *Mr. Goldfinch* becomes two people, as you will see in the above illustration. With the glasses in his pocket he remains the idol

At the Play

A Pair of Spectacles (ARTS)—*Hamlet* (O. U. PLAYERS)

of his family and fair game for every hypocritical beggar in London; but when they are on the bridge he is possessed, prying into the tradesmen's bills, reading infamy into the simplest actions of his best friends and even, horrible to tell, suspecting his adored and adoring little wife of hanky-panky in the vestry. Through these devilish instruments his disillusionment proceeds apace, until at last the only

healthy digestive, for thus to see a play stripped for action in its youth is to see its pattern afresh. Believed to be Burbage's working version, recorded by someone at the Globe, it has a running-time of no more than two and a half hours, and although the big scenes are all there only the germs of the big speeches appear. It is a recognizable and effective blue-print, minus many of the trimmings of greatness. Such lines as "'twas caviare to the million," "to be or not to be, ay, there's the point," and "O, what a dunhill idiot slave am I," tease the ear strangely.

Not content to present a novelty—the First Quarto had not been shown in London for years—*Mr. KEN TYNAN* decided to give us both barrels in his production, which overflowed with ideas, the good ones winning, though sometimes only by a short head. Eighteenth-century costume is as logical for the play as any other, and though this made the ghost, uprising from his tomb, momentarily resemble *Dr. Johnson* getting up somewhat unsteadily from table, the whole midnight business was well done.

The players' scene was also handled with imagination, the *King* casually announcing he was going to bed and then collapsing in a sudden access of extreme terror. To let the

Court root at the duel and make *Hamlet* juggle with oranges is fine, but to let him be jabbed by *Rossencraft* and *Gilderstone* (sic) during the to-do with the recorders, and to let him knock the *King* for six while he is still at prayers is all wrong. *Corambis* (*Polonius*) came out absurdly young, *Horatio* a wambling dotard, but with all its faults the production had an extremely creditable life and strength.

As *Hamlet* *Mr. PETER PARKER* deserved more poetry than Burbage had left him, *Miss EVELYN ARENGO-JONES* made a charming *Ofelia*, and *Mr. WILLIAM PATRICK* gave the *King* clear-cut authority. ERIC.



A Pair of Spectacles

A PAIR OF GOLDFINCHES
both *Mr. DENYS BLAKELOCK*

honest person left appears to be his dreadful brother. Only one thing can put this right, a fresh pair of *Mr. Goldfinch's* own spectacles, and these are found just in time to return him, benignly burbling, to his delighted circle. It's all very silly, but it's a romp of quality, and the cast rings beautifully true. *Miss AVICE LANDONE* is particularly good as *Mrs. Goldfinch*, and *Mr. DAVID BIRD's* knowing miser is great fun. The production is as lively as can be, against a rare collection of Victoriana sumptuously arranged by *Miss FANNY TAYLOR*.

Our thanks to the Oxford University Players, at the Rudolf Steiner Hall,

Superbarker

"TAKE a seat, Mr. Stentor. We have chosen you for this interview from quite a large number of applicants who want to be our doorman. You must realize it is much more than a doorman's job; much more than a commissionaire. Our doorman is the visible link between the management and our patrons. Our doorman wears a uniform and a Super-Colosseum cap. He spends part of his time in the Luxury Foyer, part on the doorstep and part on the pavement outside, with oversight of the queues—when we have queues.

"He also keeps the damn—I mean, he keeps the children in order at the Saturday matinées, a task which affords him the opportunity to gain the love and respect of a large host of juvenile patrons. You do that in your own way. We would not like to be responsible for advising you on how to handle them. That right, Mr. Golzweig?"

"Dead right, Mr. Schmalz. Let's get on to the barking."

"Right away. Mr. Stentor, I have to tell you, you have to cry aloud the name of our main feature and whether it has just started and such things, and what seats are empty. The dear seats are the seats that are empty. The others depend. It says here you were town crier until you became redundant owing to a Mechanized Motor-car Loud-speaker Amplifying Unit. You know, then, how to bark?"

"Yes, sir, I think."

"Go on then, bark. Let's hear you."

"What d'you want me to bark?"

"Anything you like. Anything suitable. What d'you say, Mr. Golzweig?"

"Try him with a hard one. Let him bark: 'Standing one-and-three and one-and-nine, seats two-and-three and two-and-nine.'"

"Go on, then, Mr. Stentor, bark that."

"Stannum onethree onenine, cease tothree tonine."

"Hmmm. The tone is good. The words don't come over quite right. What d'you say, Mr. Golzweig?"

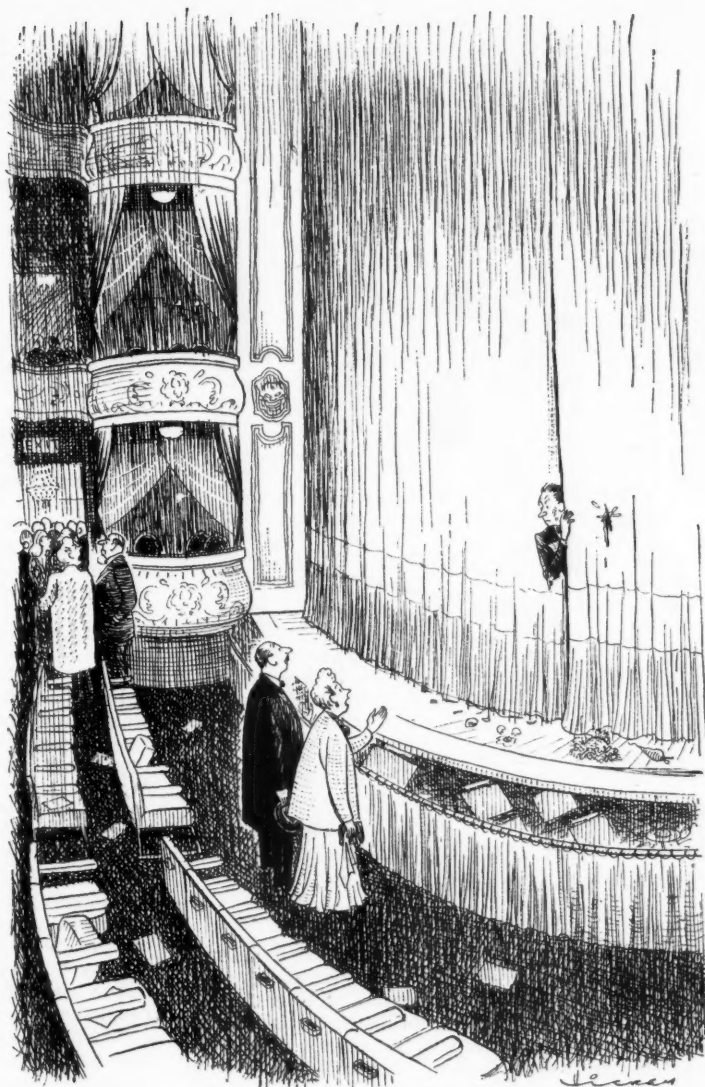
"Dead right, Mr. Schmalz. Just a little too . . . you know. Try it more like this: *Stunnun thenine season to the toenail.*"

"Stannun thenine season to the toenail."

"That's it. Got it. You think so too, Mr. Golzweig?"

"Very well barked. Let him bark again."

"Right, Stentor; bark at the queue



"May we have our tomato back?"

to keep the footpath clear. We have to do that or the police get mad, though why they should with all the free passes I don't know."

"Close it apart peas. Close it apart peas."

"Fine. I don't think we could do better. Hows about it, Mr. Golzweig?"

"Me, myself, I prefer *Close it apart ickle peas*, but that's only my own personal opinion. I must admit Stentor gets the message across."

"D'you want any more?"

"Let him bark about no children being admitted unless accompanied by an adult."

"Mr. Stentor?"

"*Gin unlimited septic and insult.*"

"Again."

"*Gin unlimited septic and insult.*"

"Very nice. The barking is O.K. One word of general advice. When the patrons ask you has the organist finished playing, say yes you think so, because they only ask when they want to dodge him. Start Monday. I think the uniform will fit. Good morning, Mr. Stentor."

"Gumdig."

Anatomical Note

"However, it may be that by the second day of congress the part one thinks with was getting somewhat paralytic (the chairs were exceedingly hard), which made quick thinking difficult."—S. African paper.



"Why, Mr. Smith! What on earth are you doing in the 'M' file?"

Our Booking Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Ike Cœur-de-Lion

GENERAL EISENHOWER, although he realizes that unarmed America in 1939 was herself in "a situation of appalling danger," yet regards the great adventure of United States forces on this side of the Atlantic primarily as an essay in chivalry, a *Crusade in Europe* (HEINEMANN, 25/-). His vigorous straightforward account of world history as he saw it being made confirms the impression that he was first and eminently foremost an organizer, more profoundly interested in men than in manoeuvres, in logistics than in actual weapons of war. Although his generously illustrated chapters establish his capacity for forthright decision, his greater genius lay in adroit handling of touchy and sometimes surprisingly emotional colleagues, and he is justly prouder of having made a real success of the unified command than of any strategic or tactical triumphs. While he does convey something of the thrill that could not fail to invest such immense actions as the landings in North Africa and Normandy and the assault across the Rhine when told by the one man in whom all trains of enterprise converged, yet it is only very occasionally—as, for instance, when disaster or success hung on the turn of the weather—that he makes dramatic capital of his almost intolerable responsibilities. He is most illuminating in clearing up mysteries such as the once unintelligible Darlan affair or the much-noticed "slapping" incident, and as far as it is humanly possible he is an impartial arbiter in a host of small achievement rivalries. The best testimony to his human greatness is the "Dear Ike" of many eminent subordinates not of his own nationality.

C. C. P.

"Stand Still, True Poet . . ."

It is a rare pleasure to welcome, after fourteen years, a new book of poems by Mrs. FRANCES CORNFORD. Here you have a sincere, accomplished and wholly unsubserving muse, for whom fashion means nothing and integrity everything—even if integrity entails, now and again, a sort of artistic tactlessness. For some reason or other Mrs. CORNFORD's more vocal admirers have always quoted her rather aggressive lapses into bathos as supreme evidences of originality. They can make do here with the "hope" and "soap" of that otherwise perfect lyric "Bedroom Dawn." The rest of us can gratefully enjoy what is penetrating rather than striking in *Travelling Home* (CRESSET PRESS, 8/6). This is the greater part of a very delightful volume, for Mrs. CORNFORD herself is penetrated by the good things of life and only occasionally struck—to the detriment, for instance, of "Lyne"—by the bad ones. Hence the exquisite sense of matured experience you get in "The Coast: Norfolk," "Gone Down," "The True Evil" and "Night Storm," a representative quartet in the last of which the flaunted homeliness that spoils "Bedroom Dawn" comes happily off. Mr. CHRISTOPHER CORNFORD's pen-and-ink drawings are at their attractive best when he refrains from illustrating what his poet—who sees as well as she hears—has illustrated up to the hilt already.

H. P. E.

Johnson and the Law

Dr. Johnson was always greatly attracted to the law, which he defined as "the last result of Publick Wisdom, acting upon Publick Experience." He said once that he ought to have been a lawyer; and when his legal friend, William Scott, predicted that had he followed the law he would have become Lord Chancellor, and could have assumed the title of Lord Lichfield, Johnson burst out—"Why will you vex me by suggesting this, when it is too late?" In *Dr. Johnson and the Law* (CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 7/6) Sir ARNOLD MCNAIR, K.C., gives a very clear and interesting account of Johnson's knowledge and experience of legal matters and relations with lawyers, famous and obscure. Of Lord Mansfield Johnson said: "It is wonderful with how little superiority of mind men can make an eminent figure in public life"; but of another Lord Chancellor, Thurlow, whose vigour and roughness of manner he perhaps relished more than Mansfield's studied urbanity, he said: "I would prepare myself for no man in England but Lord Thurlow." Johnson's views on the sanctity of property were conservative in the extreme, but he was ahead of his times, both in denouncing capital punishment for robbery and in arguing against imprisonment for debt, from which he himself had suffered more than once. The highest compliment he ever paid to the law was when he said he would "change with nobody but Hugo Grotius," the great Dutch jurist, whose arguments in support of Christianity Johnson particularly valued as emanating from a man accustomed to examine evidence.

H. K.

Consciences at War

MISS VERA BRITTAIN's new novel, *Born 1925* (MACMILLAN, 11/6), describes the conflicts, mental and emotional, which beset a parson and his family during the second world war. Wishing to show a violent revulsion against any kind of fighting in a man of undoubted courage, she lets Robert Carbury win the V.C. at Loos before he enters the Church of England and becomes a national figure as a preacher and the dynamic vicar of a London parish. His marriage to a successful actress wrapped up in her work is

happy as judged by the world, but Robert, a saintly and patient character, knows very well he can never take the place of her first husband. The Carburys are dealt with at three main points: Robert's efforts to win from his wife a deeper affection, his organization of a pacifist brotherhood which, after 1939, involves him in a bitter struggle with popular opinion, and his relations with his young son. His impetuous affection made him by no means an easy father, but Miss BRITTAIN assumes perhaps too readily that it was inevitable that the children of the shadowed thirties should grow up difficult. Adrian treated his father more unfeelingly than most until his own experiences in war showed him too late that an easy acceptance of it was not enough. Although the London blitzes are grimly reported, the book gives a less full account of this war than "Testament of Youth" gave of the last (almost its only reference to Winston Churchill is strangely offensive), Miss BRITTAIN being content to use as a background, which she does very effectively, the successive changes of public attitude. The battles she describes are chiefly in the spirit, and her handling of these is admirably understanding. E. O. D. K.

The North Woods

If only the simple life did not require so long and complex a training to make it endurable most readers of *Cache Lake Country* (ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK, 15/-) would probably be very glad to exchange civilization for existence in the Canadian North Woods as pictured in such vivid detail by Mr. JOHN J. ROWLANDS. The son of a Canadian lumberman, Mr. ROWLANDS was brought up in the woods. So when, while travelling for a timber company, he came upon a lake which realized his youthful ideal, he was properly equipped to make it his headquarters. This book is an account of a year spent by Cache Lake, as he christened it; for, he explains, "here was stored the best the north had to give: fine timber to build a cabin and keep a man warm, fish and game and berries for food, and the kind of peace and contentment that is found only in the woods." His friend and mentor in this solitude was Chief Tibeash, a small lean Indian of seventy; and after a time he was joined by a young artist, Mr. HENRY KANE, whose drawings, which are of all kinds from the fanciful to the strictly practical, add greatly to the charm of the book. Shortly before Christmas the company's plane arrived with a new pipe and a pound of his favourite kind of plug tobacco for the Chief, and a turkey, a plum pudding and brandy, on which comforting note this stern if exhilarating idyll closes. H. K.

Hide-and-Seek in China

As politics tend to become more sectarian, the difficulties of the ordinary honest man—what there is left of him—increase in the same ratio. There were four parties all inextricably mingled in China when Mr. LAURANCE TIPTON made his resourceful escape from a Japanese concentration camp in 1943: Japs, Quisling Chinese, Communists and the genuine China—all four playing hide-and-seek in every piece of cover you came to. The task of finding a real Chinese unit, and sticking to it, is the mainstay of *Chinese Escapade* (MACMILLAN, 16/-); but there is much more to this spirited, intelligent and (against all odds) hilarious book than that. It can be read for its stirring adventures in strange places; for a companionable humanity, taking East and West in its stride; and for its incidental light on the tactics of Communism. The author, a young businessman, tethered to an "autonomous" Mongolia in the interests of his firm and tried for currency offences by the

Japanese, became an enthusiast for his guerrilla unit, the Fifteenth. This consisted of local militia led by army officers. But these were the older men; and everywhere the Communists were preparing a younger generation all their own. Family life, religion and patriotism were destroyed together, and the new day was with the materialists. H. P. E.

Stricken People

Each of the fourteen stories in JOHN PUDNEY's book, *The Europeans* (THE BODLEY HEAD, 7/6), makes difficult and bitter reading, though each should ease our understanding of the people of a continent that has been over-run by war. Few of the characters are normal—as normality was understood once. In "The Third Dimension" we have the story of a hero ace-pilot, who drove a car for the first time and found that there was a dimension missing and that he was physically baulked; he did not live to tell the tale of "the brief nightmare in which there was freedom, sideways, onwards or backwards, but in which the third dimension—the bird-freedom to rise and fall—was lacking." Irony and a brilliant, almost jocular, compassion persist throughout the book, which is written with such economy of phrase and comment that one feels each story must have been jerked from the author, painfully, almost against his will and because he feels that we should and must know of the terrible changes that have been wrought in mankind. It is a book to be read humbly, and in great gratitude to an author who can tell the truth. B. E. B.



"So I told him straight—either 'e pays me time-and-a-half, or 'e employs a boy-and-a-half."



"Even if an enemy does start dropping atom-bombs, I suppose one can safely rely on a fair proportion being duds?"

Running Her Easting Down

"WELL, gentlemen," said Captain Poop as he stood on the bridge of the steamer *Porpentine*, "without permitting ourselves any complacency, I think we may say the voyage is going well. The glass is high," said the Captain, giving his telescope to an apprentice so that he could rub his hands together, "Cape Horn is safely behind us, and our good ship is bowling along at a rate which a cast of the log has revealed as not much less than that of a trotting horse. Or at any rate," he added hastily, avoiding the Mate's eye, "of a mule."

"When I was sailing before the mast in a windjammer—" began the Mate.

"I agree with you, Captain," said the Chief Engineer, Godfrey Fitzherbert, "and I readily concede a great part of the credit to my colleagues in the engine-room. Since the baleful influence of McSumph was removed they have come on by leaps and bounds: the second engineer can now readily distinguish between the low-pressure and high-pressure cylinders, and even the third and fourth, though not naturally quick in acquiring technical knowledge, have reached the stage of being able to

differentiate between the low-pressure cylinder and a fire-shovel. Of my own part in our joint effort," he went on, simpering slightly, "I hesitate to speak."

Here the Mate spat over the rail in a marked manner.

"You have done wonders, Mr. Fitzherbert," said the Captain hurriedly. "So have you, Mr. Bilgewater: I don't remember seeing a neater job of keel-hauling than the one you organized yesterday. Let us all continue to pull together," went on the Captain, standing on one leg and biting his fingernails, "and I have no doubt we shall make a record passage to—to—it's on the tip of my tongue—"

"Melbourne," said the Mate, gloomily.

"—to Melbourne; precisely, Mr. Bilgewater. It is there that we hope to dispose of our cargo of guano, which I am credibly informed is highly esteemed by the natives of those parts. And now, if you will excuse me, gentlemen, I will go below."

This is perhaps as good a place as any to insert the information (which could not convincingly be embodied in

the foregoing dialogue) that the cargo referred to had been taken on board at the Chilean port of Iquique. It was this circumstance which had been the initial cause of ill-feeling between the Mate and the Chief Engineer; for whereas the former maintained with some heat that the name of that place was "Eek-eek," Fitzherbert persisted in referring to it on every possible occasion as "Ike-ike." Physical conflict between the two men was only averted by the Captain's ruling that the correct pronunciation was "Ik-wik-wee," to which both grudgingly submitted; but the seeds of discord had been sown, and the patient reader, if he will peruse this unadorned but truthful recital a little farther, will soon discover the dire consequences of their fruition.

On the evening of the day on which our story opened the Captain and officers of the *Porpentine* were at tea in the saloon—a simple repast of salt pork and ship's biscuit, washed down with draughts of rum. The Chief Engineer was demonstrating to his juniors with the aid of a school atlas that the Mate's decision to proceed

from Iquique to Melbourne in an easterly rather than a westerly direction was a piece of gratuitous folly, while Bilgewater, whose character was robust rather than subtle, could only assuage his feelings by muttering in his beard about gimbal-eyed gold-braided grease-monkeys. The cabin-boy, one David Bohun (a youth who suffered from the delusion that he had been kidnapped aboard the *Porpentine* through the agency of his uncle Ebenezer), was pouring out a third mug of rum for the Mate when Fitzherbert, getting up from the table, accidentally jogged his elbow with such precision that the entire contents of the stone jug were flung into Bilgewater's face.

This laughable mishap might have passed off without serious consequences were it not that the Mate, in flinging up his arm to ward off the stream of corrosive liquid, unluckily let go of the marlinespike he happened to be holding, and this normally harmless implement, catching Fitzherbert on the jaw, stretched him on the floor of the saloon. Bilgewater, crying out "Dear me, Mr. Fitzherbert, have I hurt you?" (though the words were not distinguishable at the time), rushed to his colleague's aid; but stumbling in his haste, he had the misfortune to strike the latter five or six times about the head and body with his right foot. Realizing that he was doing more harm than good, the Mate desisted from his well-meaning efforts; but Fitzherbert, mistakenly supposing himself to be the object of a deliberate attack, drew a revolver from his hip-pocket and fired it several times with the object (as he afterwards explained) of attracting attention. The two men then closed in a grapple which was only broken when the Captain, calling for a kettle of boiling water, began pouring it impartially on their struggling forms.

Although the Captain expressed himself as fully satisfied with the explanations given by his two officers of the several stages of this unfortunate incident, he was unable to persuade either to resume his normal duties except on condition that the other should be immediately clapped in irons for the remainder of the run. Over this dilemma (for the services of both were essential to the prosecution of the voyage) Captain Poop pondered for the greater part of the night. The next morning he approached the Mate in his cabin.

"Mr. Bilgewater," he said, "would you consider the management of a ship's engines a more difficult task than that of acting as Mate?"

"More difficult?" exclaimed Bilgewater. "Why, a one-armed Chinese

sea-cook could run a steam-engine, but it takes a seaman to navigate the ship."

"The Chief Engineer," said Captain Poop cunningly, "believes he could navigate better than you could run the engines."

"Ha!" cried the Mate. "Let him try!"

The Captain hastened along the alleyway to Fitzherbert's cabin. "Would you suppose, Chief," he asked, "that an engineer's duty requires more skill than the task of navigating the vessel?"

"More skill!" hissed Fitzherbert. "It takes a lifetime to learn to be an engineer, but a cross-eyed baboon could pick up the knack of navigation in half an hour."

"Mr. Bilgewater," insinuated the Captain, "says he could run the engines better than you could navigate."

"Ha!" cried the Chief Engineer. "Let him try!"

The next six months passed slowly but without incident. The *Porpentine* made, on the average, about one and a

half knots, exclusive of time spent on repairs, in a direction which was admitted on all hands to be, broadly speaking, easterly; and it began to seem that Fitzherbert had got the better of the trial of skill. At last, when her provisions were almost exhausted, the *Porpentine* came in sight of land.

"Yonder, Captain," said Fitzherbert, pointing with the sextant which was now his constant companion, "is our destination, though I fear we are somewhat late for this season's wheat harvest."

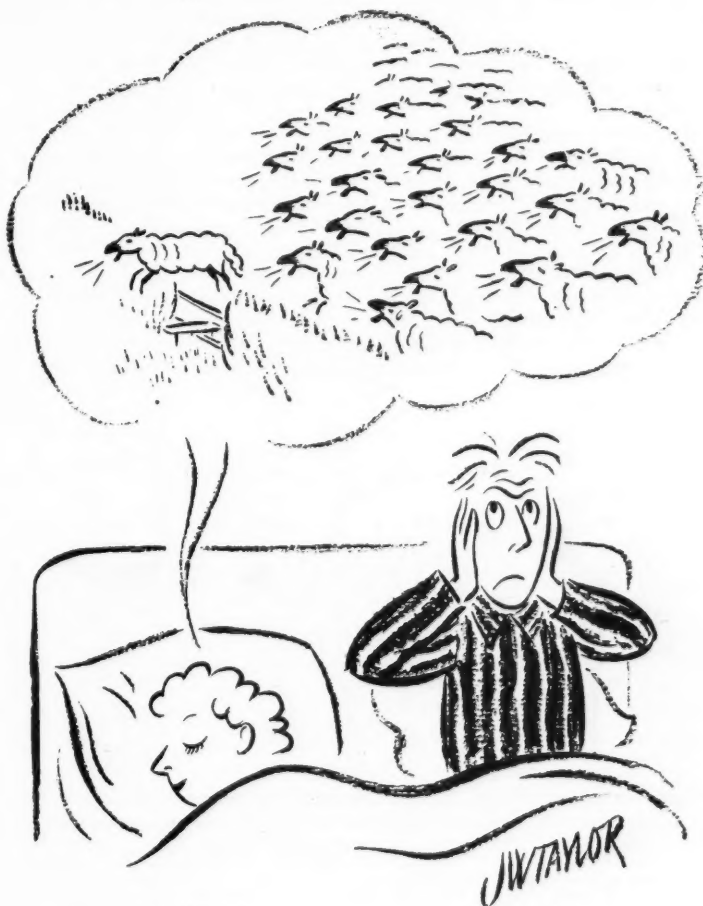
"I shouldn't worry about that," said Bilgewater, who had come up on the bridge in his overalls. "The guano crop is harvested all the year round."

"You don't mean, Mr. Bilgewater—can it be?—yes, it is!—"

"Eek-eek," said Bilgewater with unconcealed satisfaction.

"Ike-ike," snarled the discomfited Fitzherbert; but he wisely spoke below his breath.

The *Porpentine's* cargo was sold at a considerable loss. G. D. R. D.



Six With Their Eyes Shut?

MUMMY! Mummy, do you know what their uncle saw once, do you? Mummy, he's been everywhere, *all over the world*; well, I mean he's been to France and to India and probably a few other places, but he saw them *in England*. Mummy, *in England*, just in a sort of High Street with shops in it, just like if you were standing just by the post office next to the fishmonger's just looking into the road and they just came along. Mummy, guess.

Well, Martin and Hilary's uncle, Mummy: I told you. We've just been for a walk with them; just when we were going to sail my boat we saw them just going to fly Martin's aeroplane. So we all went. Well, we didn't actually sail it because it collapsed. Mummy, there's never enough keel or whatever it is on boats they make, they always blow right down to the water and get much too wet, not like a wet sheet and a flowing sea when they must have liked it wet else why would they put it in a poem, but *soaking* wet so that it won't come up again off the water, and their uncle said he would get pneumonia if he waded out in that water again, because he was the only one it wasn't too deep for—where it had gone, I mean.

Mummy, did you guess what it was he saw? Well, it was *six* of them, all with their eyes shut, or it might have been six and five with their eyes shut, because that's the awful part, he'll never know because he wasn't far enough along to see the first one and he was *rooted* to the spot. Mummy, what does it mean, *rooted* to the spot? He wasn't *really* rooted, was he? Mummy, I wish he'd seen the first one because

nobody will ever know unless we happen to meet someone else who saw them and I don't suppose we ever shall, do you? Do you think we ever shall? Or if we did we shouldn't know and we might not actually happen to mention elephants.

Mummy, the elephants he *saw*. Just in an ordinary High Street. Six elephants walking along with their eyes shut (all except perhaps the front one), with their trunks round the tails of the one in front. Ordinary coloured ordinary elephants, he said. Only I don't think there's anything very *ordinary* about it. And nobody riding them or anything, except there was a little man on the pavement, wearing a cap, not a turban or anything, or a jewelled belt or a white dress thing on, only a suit and a cap.

Mummy, he's going back to India. In an aeroplane. We didn't fly Martin's after all because we came to a *haunted* house. Well, it *sounded* haunted. It was all knocked down and there was a mysterious sort of noise we heard when we were outside the garden wall, and Hilary said it was a ghost trying to get out; and Martin said there were plenty of holes for it to get out by if it wanted to; and Christopher said it was only bombed in the war, ghosts were much older than that; and I said well they weren't *born* old, they must have happened once and whenever they happened they were new and this might be a new one; and their uncle said come along, first you drive me into an icy pond, then you stand me in an east wind; and Christopher said I shan't be a minute and climbed up the wall, and the wall all fell down suddenly, mostly on their uncle, but

Christopher cut his knee and his hand. Their uncle tore his trousers. Mummy, he's going back to India on Tuesday: I wish he wasn't going back, I asked him why he had to go back: he said for a nice rest.

Oh, the ghost? It was just a bit of paper caught in a bit of wall, rustling up and down in the wind. Anyway that's what Christopher said. No one else saw it. He said we all *funked* it. Mummy, *nobody* funk'd it; their uncle wouldn't let anyone else climb up, he said his nerves were bad. Mummy, I wish he'd seen the front one, if it had its eyes shut too. Why do you keep asking about Christopher? He's playing football with Martin. Do you think it *did* have its eyes shut? Well, do you think? Their uncle said they were all thinking how nice to be back in India. Do you think that's what they were all thinking? Do you think perhaps the first one was thinking it with his eyes open because he was the leader, and the others were thinking it with their eyes shut because of their trunks round the one in front's tail like a row of sausages? Is that what you *think* it was, Mummy, is it?

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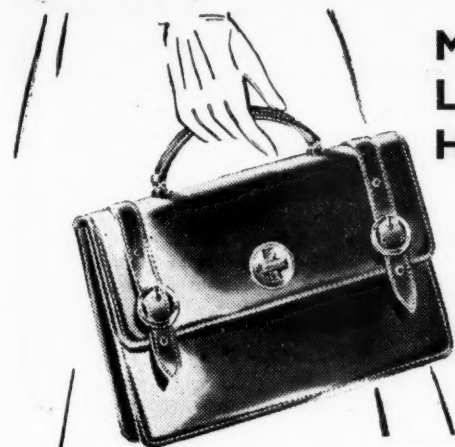


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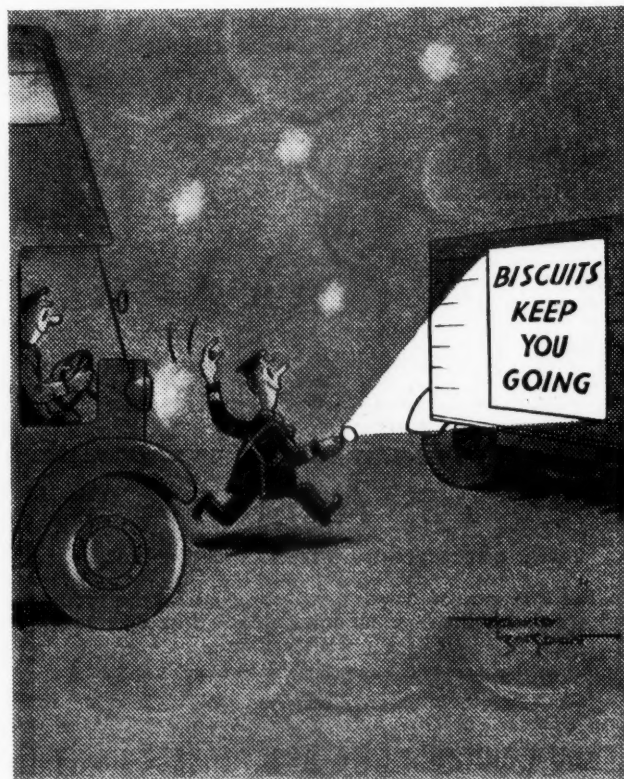
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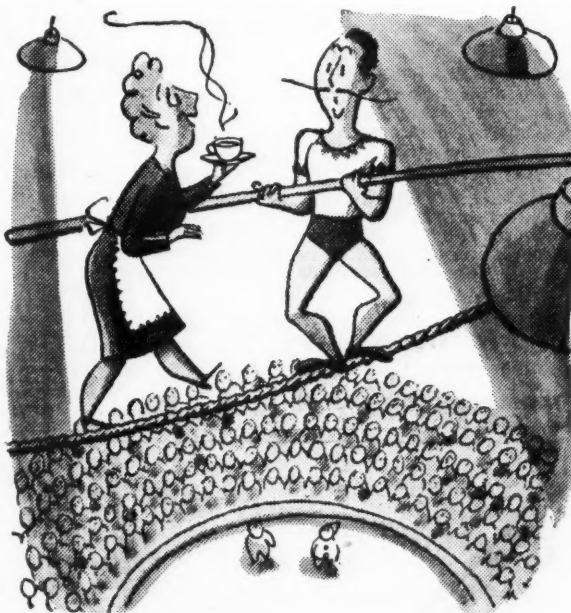
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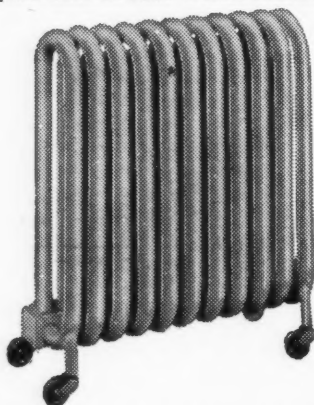
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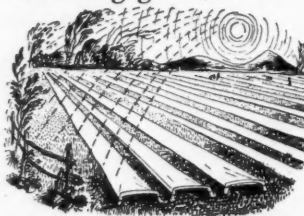
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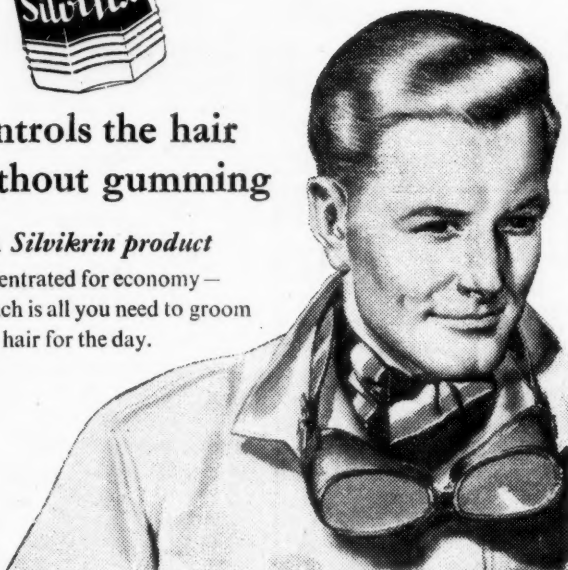


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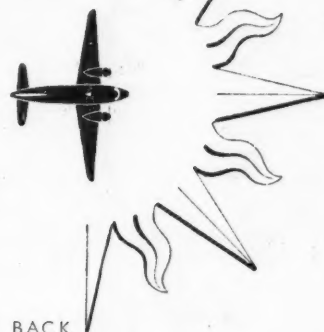
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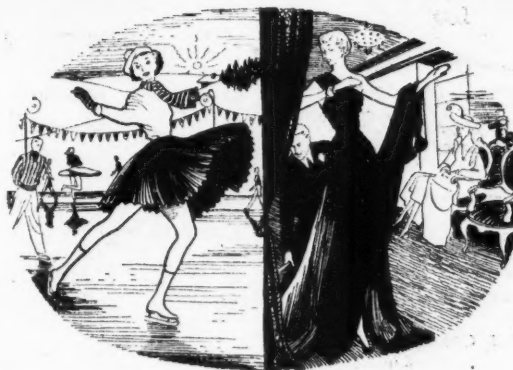
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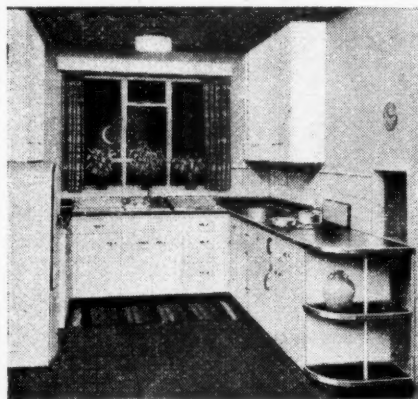
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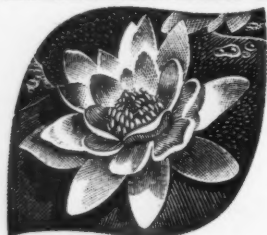
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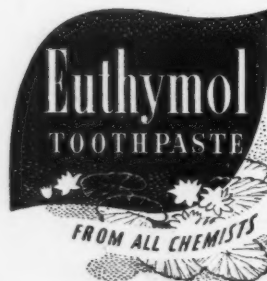
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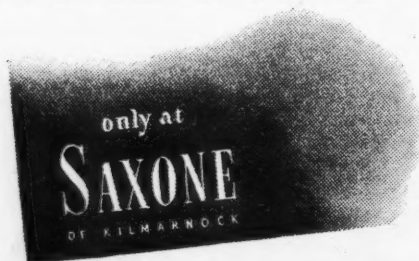
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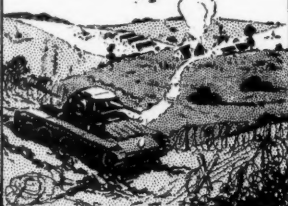


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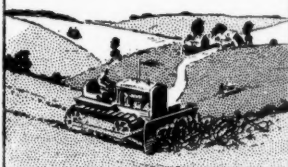
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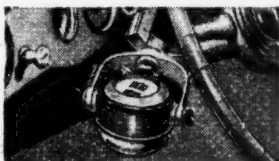
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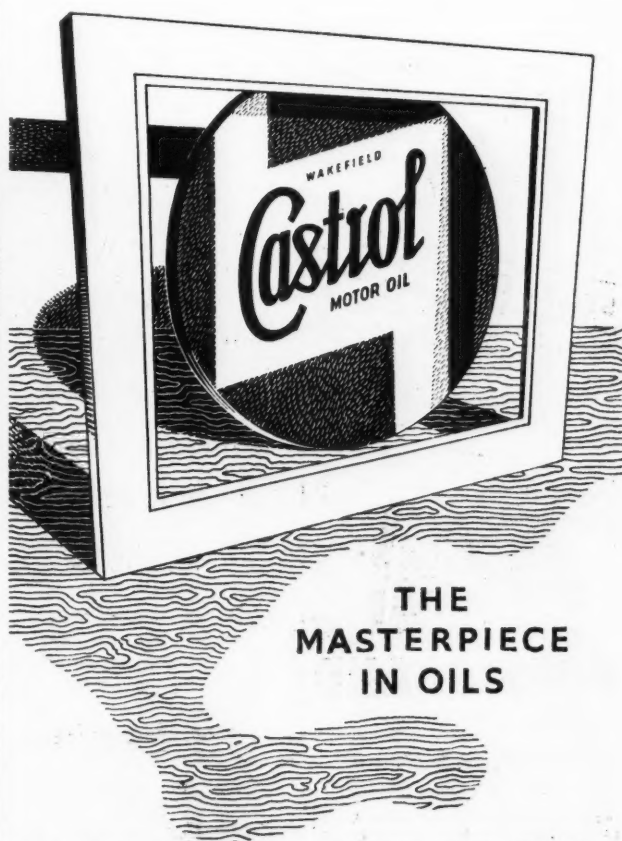
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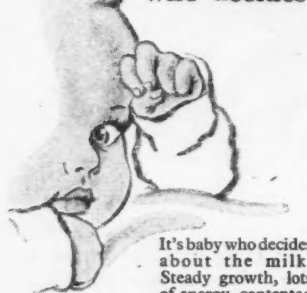


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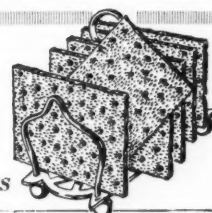
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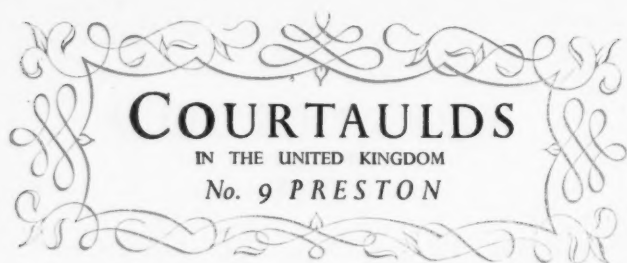


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IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

No. 9 PRESTON

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This steady growth of public confidence led in 1934 to Courtaulds deciding to build at Preston in Lancashire a new viscose rayon yarn factory (their fifth in the country), planned to add another 30% to production. It was eight years since the Company had designed a new yarn factory, and when building started in 1935 important improvements were embodied to lower costs and raise quality still further.

So Red Scar Works came into being, named after an old mansion nearby. It was the largest single rayon "unit" Courtaulds had so far installed in Great Britain.

Production at Preston began in 1939, and very soon afterwards important savings expected from the new methods and machinery were more than realised.

Completion of the factory's equipment was impeded by the war, during which a large area of floor-space was requisitioned and about one in five of its employees joined the Forces.

Today, of 25,000 people employed by Courtaulds in the United Kingdom, some 2,000 are hard at it in Proud Preston's Red Scar Works, the Company's most modern rayon yarn factory.

This is one of a series of statements to inform the public of some part of the contribution made by Courtaulds' industrial enterprise to economic well-being in various districts of the United Kingdom.

Issued by Courtaulds Limited, 16 St. Martins-le-Grand, London, E.C.1.



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